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March 2015

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NEW FEATURES**

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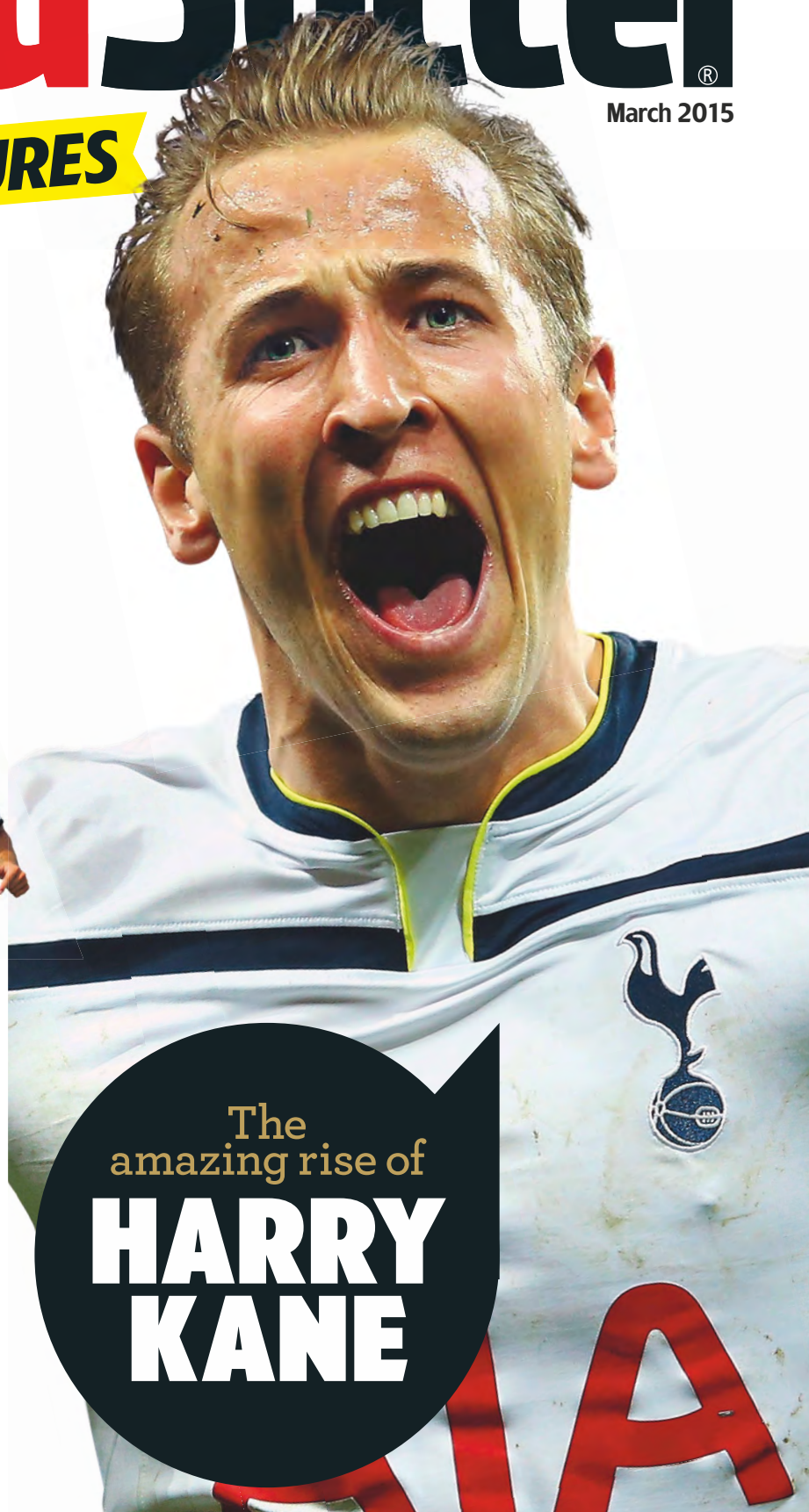
Dybala, Lacazette, Kane...

LATIN STARLETS

10 future stars
from South
America



Renaissance men Lyon's return to the top in France



The
amazing rise of
**HARRY
KANE**

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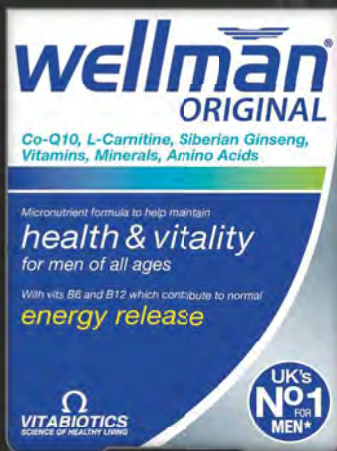
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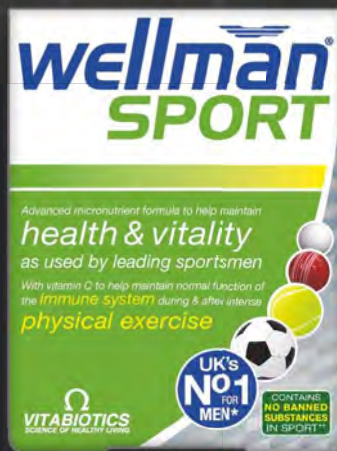
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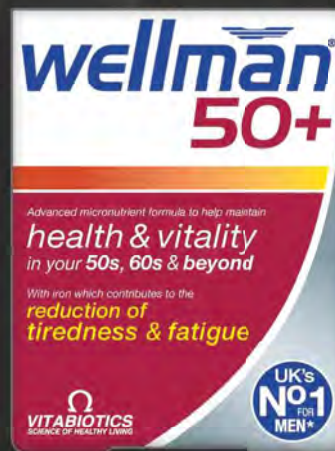
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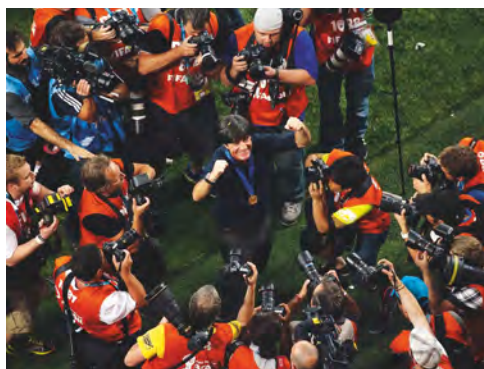
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In Pictures

The global game caught on camera





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BRAZIL: Felipe of Corinthians celebrates a goal against Colombia's Once Caldas in the Libertadores Cup



IVORY COAST: Supporters fill the Stade Felix Houphouet-Boigny in Abidjan to welcome home the African Nations Cup winners



SCOTLAND: Callum Morris of Dundee United jumps highest to score against Aberdeen in the semi-final of the Scottish League Cup



ITALY: Milan's Philippe Mexes grabs Lazio's Stefano Mauri by the throat, as team-mate Lucas Biglia and Milan's Riccardo Montolivo and Pablo Armero (right) try to intervene



URUGUAY: Argentina's Leo Suarez in action against Peru during the South American Under-20 Championship



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FROM THE EDITOR

The media is often accused of overhyping young players. But in the case of this month's cover star, Harry Kane, the hype seems justified. Some pundits have called for caution, comparing Kane with his Spurs team-mate Andros Townsend, who is no longer an England regular after a spectacular debut. It has always been difficult for young wingers, whose main attributes are pace and trickery, to maintain consistency. Kane's game, in contrast, relies on intelligence rather than speed. However, it is his background that makes his story genuinely deserving of a wider audience.

His family roots in north-east London have engendered a valuable connection with fans at a time when the new Premier League television deal threatens to push football further out of the reach of ordinary spectators.

It is far easier for clubs to buy in talent rather than develop it, while Chelsea have shown how profitable it can be to trade young players rather than play them. In an era when most Premier League clubs are scared of fielding youngsters, Kane's emergence this season is a refreshing departure from the norm. And one that should be celebrated.



Gavin Hamilton, Editor

Kane's emergence this season is a refreshing departure from the norm. And one that should be celebrated



10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

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EGYPT

At least 20 fans killed in Cairo stadium crush

It was another black month in Egyptian football. On February 8, just before Zamalek were due to play ENPPI in the Egyptian Premier League, at least 20 fans lost their lives in a crush at the Air Defence Stadium on the outskirts of Cairo.

There is still some confusion over the exact sequence of events, but this much is clear. The police had constructed a barbed wire-and-metal cage to corral the 10,000 expected spectators through a single entrance. A crush developed. Videos posted on YouTube by Zamalek supporters appear to show a riot policeman calmly firing round after round of tear-gas shells into the crowd.

There was swift condemnation, but not of the police tactics. Zamalek's outspoken president Mortada Mansour, as well as the authorities, immediately blamed ticketless fans for causing the deaths. One Zamalek player, Omar Gaber, refused to play the match on hearing of the deaths and was suspended by the club. The league was



Military man... President Sisi



Making a stand...Zamalek suspended Gaber (left) after he refused to play

“I’m certainly not a racist, and my history as a coach proves it, but while watching the Viareggio [youth] tournament it seemed to me that there were too many black players”

Former Milan and Italy boss Arrigo Sacchi sparks a furore with his thoughts on youth development in his homeland



also suspended, but is likely to resume by early March.

That one tragic statistic alone – of at least 20 fans going to a match and not returning home – would be enough for a long period of soul searching and reform in most countries. But not in Egypt. The deaths took place almost three years on from the Port Said massacre, where 72 fans of Al Ahly were killed after a game against Al Masry.

The fight for justice, lead by Ahly's Ahlawy ultras group, saw the league suspended and picketed until a court case was heard. Players refused to play, many initially retiring from football altogether, before reversing their decision and going on to win the African Champions League – an ambition they wanted to achieve to honour the dead.

But this is a different Egypt. In 2011, during the January 25th revolution that swept Hosni Mubarak from power, Egypt's football ultras played a key role. They were

considered the protectors of the revolution in Tahrir Square, a body of young men who were the only people that had any experience fighting the hated police.

Since then Egypt's first freely elected

Security..police had erected cages made of wire and metal



Protest...a supporter outside the Air Defence Stadium in Cairo

president, Mohamed Morsi, has been removed from power in a coup and replaced by a military man in President Sisi. The counter revolution has once again painted the ultras as a threat to national security. Zamalek president Mansour, who has had many run-ins with the club's Ultras White Knights fan group, labelled the UWK “terrorists” who are in league with the now banned Muslim Brotherhood.

The UWK, for their part, called the deaths a “political assassination”, repeating the claim also made by the Ahlawy that the stadium deaths, like those in 2012, were “payback” by the regime for their role in the revolution.

The authorities have denied the claims but there are likely to be more battles ahead. Those, however, won't take place on the terraces.

When the league resumes it will be without fans, who are banned again. It will be a long time until they return.

James Montague



“In the future, I will not buy any player likely to play at the African Nations Cup. On that you can depend”

Montpellier owner Louis Nicollin shows his frustration at losing the services of Ivory Coast's Siaka Tiene and Jamel Saihi of Tunisia

GOALS

we'd like to see again

1 EZEQUIEL LAVEZZI Paris Saint-Germain v Rennes

A superb team move of quick incisive inter-passing is finished from close range.

2 JOAO PEDRO Sao Jose v Internacional

A looping overhead kick during the 4-4 draw in the Rio Grande do Sul state championship.



To see video footage of these goals, and many more that we have selected, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the videos by logging on to <http://po.st/AkfmW5>



3 LEANDRO BENEGAS Universidad de Chile v Huachipato

Shows great control on the edge of the area before unleashing a stunning overhead kick.

4 KOSTA BARBAROUSES Melbourne Victory v Sydney

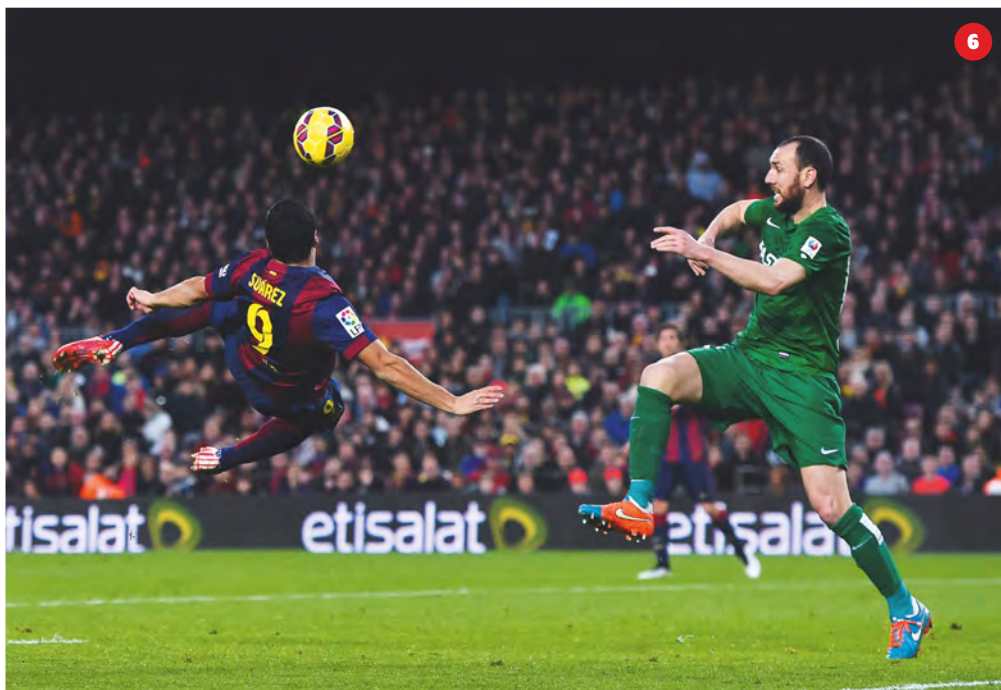
Exchanges passes before making space for himself to curl home with the outside of his boot.

5 ARJEN ROBBEN Bayern Munich v Hamburg

The pick of Bayern's eight-goal spree, a fine solo effort finished superbly with a shot that curls into the top corner.

6 LUIS SUAREZ Barcelona v Levante

Stylish bicycle kick from close range as he latches on to a pin-point cross by Adriano.



WINNERS

PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS

Sold the 2016-19 domestic TV rights for £5.136billion – which works out at £10million a match.



TIM CAHILL & MARK BRESCIANO

The Asian Cup-winning Australian duo are the first to land two separate continental titles, having also won the OFC Nations Cup in 2004.



WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS

At the 14th time of asking, the AFC Champions League holders eventually won an A-League match this season.



MALI

Lost out to Guinea on the drawing of lots to determine who should progress to the African Nations Cup quarter-finals after both teams finished with identical records in the group.



PARMA

Serie A's bottom side set a new club record of eight straight away defeats in the league when losing 3-1 to Milan.



ARVID SCHENK

German goalkeeper who was released by Scottish side Dundee after letting in six goals against rivals Dundee United in his only game.



LOSERS

“He must stop trying to do a Zidane. He’ll never be Zidane. He has to be less presumptuous when he plays and look to be more efficient”

Sky Italia pundit Zvonimir Boban advises Juventus midfielder Paul Pogba (right) to keep his feet on the ground



Headliner



Herve Renard

Double Nations Cup winner in demand

The Frenchman's lucky white shirt may have been mostly covered by a pink bib that officials forced him to wear on the touchline during the African Nations Cup in Equatorial Guinea, but the 46-year-old still set a new landmark for the tournament by becoming the first coach to win the title with two different countries.

And even though he has 18 months left on his contract, victory with Ivory Coast now sets up Renard for a return to his homeland and a chance to pursue his next ambition of leading a club in the Champions League.

Despite having had a testy relationship with the players and a frustrating one with his employers, Renard somehow managed to galvanise the Ivorians at the right time.

Renard got it right. “The game against Cameroon was the vital turning point for us,” he said of the 1-0 win in Malabo that ensured his side finished top of Group D and sent Cameroon home early.

“It was the first time I could feel everyone pulling in the right direction.”

Many of the promises made to Renard by the Ivorian federation regarding training camps, facilities and his own personal circumstances were not met after he succeeded Sabri Lamouchi following last year's World Cup. But with two Nations

Cup titles to his name, he will have plenty of alternate options in the coming months.

Renard has made a swift ascent up the ladder of world football less than a decade after a chance meeting with veteran French coaching adventurer Claude Le Roy offered him a chance to work in the game.

He had been running his own office-cleaning business in the south of France before becoming Le Roy's assistant with Ghana at the 2008 African Nations Cup finals. Since then Renard has been to every tournament, taking Zambia to the quarter-finals in 2010 and the winners' podium two years after.

In 2013 his Zambia side crashed out in the first round and later the same year he moved to Sochaux, coming close to keeping them in Ligue 1 before imploding on the last day of the season.

Mark Gleeson

Success...Renard celebrates with his Ivorian players

“He was very hard on us, but we now can see what a good manager he was”

Yaya Toure on Renard

Yaya Toure offered some begrudging recognition minutes after the Final victory over Ghana, in Bata, when talking about how Renard had challenged all of the players, him included, and threatened to leave them out unless they showed an improvement. “He was very hard on us, but we now can see what a good manager he was,” said Toure.

Renard consistently complained about the disparate individual agendas in the squad, saying before the tournament: “When there is a big squad like we have sometimes, when they come back to their country they think sometimes they are the king. A lot of them. But usually there can only be one king per territory.”

During the finals he spent a lot of time on the bench berating players. Toure was among those who would get a regular earful, and more than once, when the media probed Renard about the potential of his side, he would always be positive but then add sarcastically: “If they listen.”

Patently it was not easy to galvanise so many egos, but by force of personality





"It's not normal that too many players didn't have any desire"

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti feels compelled to target his superstars following the humiliating 4-0 derby loss to Atletico

OBITUARIES



World Cup history maker...Borghi

Frank BORGI (1925-2015)

A former catcher in the developmental system of Major League Baseball's St Louis Cardinals, he kept goal for the USA in their famous 1-0 victory over England at the 1950 World Cup.

Rik COPPENS

(1930-2015)

Winner of Belgium's first player of the year award in 1954, he was the league's top scorer in the 1952-53 and 1954-55 seasons with Beerschot. Scored 21 goals in 47 internationals.



Landmark...Coppens

Udo LATTEK (1935-2015)

See appreciation, opposite



Titles...Nunweiler

Ion NUNWEILLER

(1936-2015)

Capped 40 times by Romania, the defender won five league titles and three Romanian Cups with Dinamo Bucharest, and then led the club to three more league titles as coach.

The first notable Romanian to be allowed to play abroad by the Communist regime, he won the league and Turkish Cup with Fenerbahce.

Oumar SYLLA (1988-2015)

The Senegalese midfielder, who played for Dudelange of Luxembourg in this season's Champions League qualifying campaign, died after a battle with liver cancer.

HEROES & VILLAINS

BRADFORD CITY

Two down at Premier League leaders Chelsea, the third-tier side came back to win 4-2 in the FA Cup fourth round, then beat another top-flight side, Sunderland, in the next round.

UNION BERLIN

The German second-tier club extended the contract of midfielder Benjamin Kohler by a year after he was diagnosed with cancer.



Chilling...Standard Liege's anti-Defour banner



Local hero...Becker celebrates with Equatorial Guinea

ESTEBAN BECKER

The Argentinian led host nation and unfancied Equatorial Guinea to the semi-finals of the African Nations Cup, despite having just a few months to prepare his team after the country took over hosting duties from Morocco.

BOUBACAR BARRY

The veteran Ivory Coast goalkeeper saved from his opposite number before scoring the decisive spot-kick to help his country to a 9-8 penalty shoot-out win against Ghana in the Final of the African Nations Cup.



Spot on...Barry fires home the winning penalty

STANDARD LIEGE FANS

Unfurled a huge banner depicting the severed head of former player Steven Defour before a game against his current club Anderlecht.

KLAAS-JAN HUNTELAAR

Schalke's Dutch forward was banned for six matches following a red card after he lunged at Hanover's Manuel Schmiedebach and got nowhere near the ball.

PHILIPPE MEXES

The Milan defender was banned for four matches after he grabbed Lazio captain Stefano Mauri

round the throat towards the end of a Serie A match that Milan lost 3-1. It was the 16th red card of the Frenchman's career.

RAJINDRAPARSAD SEECHURN

The Mauritian referee was banned for six months by CAF after awarding hosts Equatorial Guinea a controversial stoppage-time penalty on their way to beating Tunisia 2-1 in the African Nations Cup.



Walk of shame...Huntelaar

“I’m a farmer’s son who came from nothing. I have football to thank for everything”

Udo Lattek



■ OBITUARY

The most successful coach in Bundesliga history

UDO LATTEK (1935-2015)

Udo Lattek was an achiever, but an achiever whose low-profile preference secured him a public profile which shone far more modestly than other, far less successful coaches who projected themselves more assiduously.

But that was the way he wanted it. He encouraged his teams to do his talking out on the pitch – which was one reason why his style worked so effectively in German football in the 1970s and 1980s but was spectacularly ill-suited to the magnified focus of Barcelona inbetween.

The football limelight was a long way from childhood life on a farm in what was then Sensburg in Germany and is now Boze in Poland. The chaos of the end of the war saw his family flee north to Denmark and then down into West Germany and a reconnection with farming life. After leaving school, Lattek trained in Munster as a sports teacher and pursued his education on a German Football Association (DFB) coaching course. Here he caught the eye of Hennes Weisweiler, who would later recommend Lattek as coach of the national youth team.

That was the end of school life for Lattek. Impressing at the DFB, he was a member of Helmut Schon’s staff at the 1966 World Cup and it was during this time he first worked with the young Franz Beckenbauer, who was largely responsible for persuading Bayern Munich to hire the



untested 35-year-old in 1970.

To a nucleus of Beckenbauer, Gerd Muller, Sepp Maier and Georg Schwarzenbeck, he added youthful talents such as Paul Breitner, Uli Hoeness and Rainer Zobel and in 1971 Bayern won the German Cup. Under Lattek they were domestic champions for the next three seasons and became German football’s

In charge...overseeing Bayern’s march to a first European Cup triumph

first European Cup winners, in 1974.

But complacency set in and, handed the blame, Lattek was sacked the following January. Not out of work for long, he replaced his mentor, Weisweiler, at Borussia Monchengladbach and the club won the Bundesliga twice, were 1977 European Cup runners-up to Liverpool

and lifted the UEFA Cup two years later.

Lattek moved on to Borussia Dortmund, but following the death of his 15-year-old son, Dirk, he needed a new frontier on which to focus and went to Spain. At the end of his first season with Barcelona he won the Cup-winners Cup to become the first coach to win all three European trophies with different clubs.

The following summer, however, Barca bought Diego Maradona and that was the beginning of the end as the pair were never on the same wavelength. One day, after Lattek, irritated by the Argentinian’s lazy timekeeping, ordered the team bus to leave without him. Maradona complained and Lattek was fired.

He returned to Germany and won three more titles and two more cups with Bayern, before spells at Cologne, Schalke and back at Borussia Dortmund, during which he saved them from relegation.

Following his retirement, Lattek spent 16 years as a hugely popular TV analyst.

Keir Radnedge

Final...Lattek (second from left) next to the England bench in 1966



■ LATTEK’S COACHING HONOURS

Bayern Munich
1971 German Cup
1972 Bundesliga
1973 Bundesliga
1974 Bundesliga
1974 European Cup

Borussia Monchengladbach
1976 Bundesliga
1977 Bundesliga
1979 UEFA Cup

Barcelona
1982 European Cup-winners Cup
1983 Spanish League Cup

Bayern Munich
1984 German Cup
1985 Bundesliga
1986 Bundesliga
1986 German Cup
1987 Bundesliga

**"I can assure you, I've no links with this affair.
I think my name was used to grab attention"**

**Accused of depositing €1.4m in a tax-evasion scheme
run by the HSBC bank, Uruguayan ace Diego Forlan
denies all knowledge of the matter**



Headliner



Luis Figo

Former Portugal star's unexpected FIFA bid

The way Luis Figo tells his tale of the road to conversion, it was at the World Cup last summer that he was smitten with a realisation that FIFA is not all it cracked itself up to be.

For 20 years he had lived, worked and played within the cosseted depths of the world-football machine: hero of Sporting Lisbon, captain of Barcelona and Portugal, lucrative galactico at Real Madrid followed by career-climax with Internazionale.

Then, Figo started to come out into the real world. At the World Cup in Brazil he saw beyond the ovations and the acclaim as he took his spectator's seat. And his ears and eyes were opened.

"In the last few months I have come to realise how FIFA's image has deteriorated," said Figo in launching his FIFA presidency campaign at Wembley. "Last year in Brazil, during the most important sports competition there is, during the World Cup, I witnessed all the protests against [FIFA], even in a country such as Brazil which loves football deeply.

"Every time I went to a stadium, and

saw and heard the reaction to the image of the president of the organisation [Sepp Blatter], I saw such a negative reaction.

"Therefore I think this image that we are aware of, about this organisation that leads football, is not appropriate."

This may be considered an understatement and Figo may also be taunted as a very late arrival at a party demanding change in FIFA's attitudes, structures and president himself. But better late than never. Along with FIFA's Asian vice-president Prince Ali of Jordan and Dutch federation chairman Michael Van Praag, he completes a triumvirate of rivals to Blatter who guarantee a noisy campaign leading up to the vote at FIFA Congress in Zurich on May 29.

Blatter's FIFA has been criticised for the suspicion that development grants are dispensed to countries in the developing world which are happy to express their gratitude, reciprocally, through the election ballot box.

Beyond Europe, north America and the Far East, that sweeps up a majority

of FIFA's member nations so the vote-value is in-built. Hence Figo's acceptance that, if he wishes to cut the figure of a serious contender and not a mere UEFA/Platini puppet, he must pursue support in a wider world than the 14-strong cabal who provided candidacy nominations for himself (all six: Denmark, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland and Portugal), for Van Praag (all five: Belgium, Faroe Islands, Romania, Scotland and Sweden) and for Prince Ali (three out of the minimum of five: Belarus, England and Georgia – plus his own Jordan and the United States).

One outreach offer is ramping up the grassroots development budget to 50 per cent of FIFA's revenue; another is returning \$1bn of the \$1.5bn in cash reserves to the national associations; another is a massive expansion of the World Cup to 40 or 48 teams (with the

**"In the last few months I have
come to realise how FIFA's image
has deteriorated"**

Luis Figo

**Manifesto...Figo puts
his case at Wembley**



group stage split between two continents); and yet another in more places for ambitious officials around the ExCo table.

Figo's formal 20-page manifesto for change also included a proposal for a 12-year maximum term for the FIFA president. On the basis that term limits were blown out of the water by Congress last year, this is one proposal on which he will not be urged to dwell.

The initial promotional effort on Figo's behalf had included statements of support from the likes of Jose Mourinho and David Beckham. Figo insisted that he had spoken with figures of influence as well as figures of "mere" celebrity.

He said: "Some associations now are led by other former players who also feel the need for change. The president of the federation of Luxembourg [Paul Philipp, 54 caps] showed his solidarity then the president of the association in Denmark [Jesper Moller] is in favour of a good debate for the presidency and also, of course, my own federation in Portugal.

"I trust that most of them want a change and are ready for a democratic change, a change that can achieve transparency and so FIFA goes back to focusing on the football itself"

Keir Radnedge

“

Paul
GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

Vanishing spay will stay, whatever IFAB thinks

Are those guys in Dublin for real? There surely ought to be an impish Irish grin built into this announcement from the FAI, but I detect no levity. Apparently they really mean it when they say they've decided not to let referees use vanishing spray.

So, what's good enough for the World Cup, the Champions League, the English Premier League, for all of South America, for Germany, Italy, France and Spain, will not be seen in the Republic of Ireland.

This is the official thumbs down: "We will not be introducing vanishing spray into the SSE Airtricity League this season as we wish to carry out more research into its effectiveness."

The FAI has wandered into territory usually occupied by the International Football Association Board (IFAB), which maintains a splendid record of thumbing down sensible suggestions. Actually, IFAB hasn't been heard from on this issue, although it would seem to be a matter of concern for the rule-makers. I think it likely that IFAB simply didn't know that the spray has been in widespread use in Latin America for several years now, otherwise it

would have taken great delight in nixing it.

The feeble IFAB has now been upstaged by FIFA's decision to use the spray during the World Cup. No going back on that, though I imagine the next rule book will contain a pernickety sentence or two mandating a yellow card for any player who interferes with the spray markings. David Luiz got away with that in a recent Champions League game, though his attempt to expunge the white markings didn't look too successful.

The thing that really intrigues me in the FAI's spray demurral is the bit about "more research into its effectiveness".

Meaning, does it work? I cannot see that there is any doubt about that. In fact, it works so well that it's one of those simple ideas that has everyone asking "why did it take so long?"

I suppose there might be doubts about its safety, or its ecological credentials, but I thought the trusty Germans had sorted those issues. Maybe not. Maybe a referee (a whistle-blower, that is) has informed the FAI

that the soft, cuddly looking spray is far from harmless, that it is really a slow-acting form of agent orange that will eventually lay waste to all the world's top pitches. Or, how about this, it has a vapour with addictive properties that will soon give us a legion of glue-sniffing referees.

And before you accuse me of wild fantasies, a reminder: In this column, back in June 2002, I suggested that Viagra might belong on the banned drug list. A joke? Sort of – but the

pharmacology of the drug seemed to fit not only sexual stimulation, but athletic performance-enhancement too.

Argentina's River Plate recently played a Libertadores Cup tie against San Jose in Bolivia at an altitude of 12,000 feet – that's over two miles high. The River Plate players were dosed with Viagra. "It will stimulate the circulation of oxygen in the blood and help the players breath better" said the River medical staff.

There, anything is possible. In this case, the altitude won. River lost the game 2-0. **WS**

Ireland will not let referees use vanishing spray

Common sight...vanishing spray is used everywhere these days



“



Keir RADNEDGE

THE INSIDER

Platini gets his way



Saturday night fever...Platini greets Gareth Bale after Real Madrid's Champions League Final victory last season

The Final of the Champions League this season takes place in Berlin on Saturday, June 6. Only once has the grand climax to the European club season been played deeper into the summer and that was all the way back at the inception, with the inaugural Final, played between Real Madrid and Reims in the old Stade de France in Paris, on June 13, 1956.

That apart, only two subsequent Finals have even strayed into the first days of June. But the 2015 Final has to wait for a Saturday because that is how Michel Platini wants it. And he has his reasons.

One of the misconceptions about Platini is that UEFA's president is no friend of English football, but that is wrong.

The Frenchman is passionate about the English game and its traditions. What he abhors is the commercial priority which commands the Premier League.

For Platini football is, first of all, a game, a recreation. His resigned regret is that, in his role at the head of European football, he has to balance his idealism against financial pragmatism. When he started campaigning to become UEFA president he talked of turning the clock back, retreating from the Champions League mini-leagues to the grand old days when the European Cup was do-or-die, knock-out stuff. Then, gently, the facts of

financial life were explained to him.

His love affair with knockout football, kindled by a childhood fascination with England's FA Cup, demanded compromise. This took the form of a nakedly political reorganisation of the qualifying rounds. Thus more clubs from the vote-heavy European middle class can access open competition with the Real Madrids and Barcelonas. For three autumnal months anyway.

Platini was not finished with his FA Cup re-creation. He scrapped the on-pitch presentation of medals and cup at the

Champions Final because he wanted every player to enjoy the status of that long walk up to the VIP box, the long walk

he remembered watching from Wembley on television every first Saturday in May.

He had spent his childhood anticipating and watching the FA Cup Final on a Saturday. And now everyone could enjoy the sensation. Hence in 2010, as soon as contracts permitted, Platini moved the Champions League Final from a Wednesday evening to a Saturday night.

He even talked of this switch offering more fans and families the opportunity to attend, though the money men swiftly forgot that one.

So Platini has his Saturday Final and UEFA's promotional experts have capitalised by creating a revenue-generating, profile-

building week of football leading up to the event. But not everyone is happy. Murmurs of discontent are growing among officials in fixture-laden leagues who resent having one weekend "stolen" by UEFA for what is, otherwise, a midweek competition.

In an age of continuing austerity, clubs are finding that their fans will not come out in numbers for two matches a week when it's necessary to squeeze the fixture list. An "English week" the Germans call it. The Bundesliga has three of them this season but will trim back to two next term. The reason is simple: fans of all but the top clubs will not turn out. Some of the recent midweek games were played in stadia only half-full.

Concerns will escalate along the road to the 2022 World Cup and whatever havoc that may wreak on the European league season. As if it is not complex enough already with the finale in Berlin, the latest Champions Final in 58 years.

Blatter's last laugh with IOC

Although his opponents may not acknowledge it, Sepp Blatter has a sense of humour. Occasionally, however, the jokes and jokey asides misfire, but that is the price he pays for linguistic fluency. What is funny in one language is decidedly unfunny in another. Even insulting.

But Blatter must surely have been enjoying the joke he has been playing on his colleagues in the International Olympic Committee. Not that they have appreciated it. IOC members are not known for laughing at themselves.

Football is not up among the upper class of Olympic sports. That elitist status is reserved for the likes of athletics and artificially created events such as modern pentathlon.

Blatter thus represents the "working class" in the IOC. So how he must have been enjoying the sudden panic sown among IOC colleagues fearful that the World Cup might clash with – and thrash for popularity – the Winter Olympics in January/February 2022.

Gian-Franco Kasper, president of the FIS (the International Ski Federation), grouched that "the FIFA people think they are god...FIFA behaves as if it has never heard of anyone else, that's how strong football is".

Too true...and Blatter has doubtless enjoyed ensuring his IOC colleagues know it. **WS**

He spent his childhood watching the FA Cup Final on a Saturday

“He’s sometimes isolated in the dressing room because of his privileged relationship with the club president, Vincent Labrune, and the image of him as the favourite of Bielsa”

***L'Equipe* claims Florian Thauvin is often shunned by Marseille team-mates**



BRAZIL

To add to the depressing scenario of contemporary Brazilian football, the under-20 team went down 2-0 to Argentina in the South American Championship.

With the intelligent Gallo as coach, there were hopes that this side might indicate a post-World Cup way forward. Instead they were a disappointment. There is some individual talent on show, with the 17-year-old midfielder Gerson filling many a scouts' notebook. But collectively the team shows no advance on recent failings.

They are physically imposing and very dangerous on the break, but sadly lacking in guile and imagination.

They have qualified for the World Under-20 Cup, but it is just as well that Brazil are hosting the next Olympics, and qualify automatically, because they may well have missed out otherwise.

Tim Vickery

Beaten...Brazil under-20s lost to Argentina

SPAIN

Once upon a time, Atletico Madrid just could not beat Real Madrid. But then along came Diego Simeone. And now, Real just can't beat Atletico. At least not this season.

Their meeting in February was the sixth derby of the campaign – and one with a familiar outcome. Atletico have won four and drawn two this term, while Real have not won once. But if the result was familiar, the scoreline was stunning.

Goals from Tiago, Saul, Antoine Griezmann and Mario Mandzukic gave

Atletico an incredible 4-0 victory. It was the first time they had won a Liga game against Real at the Calderon in almost 17 years and only once before had they won by more goals, back in 1947. They had not scored four in a derby at the Calderon in 38 years and it was their second league win of the season over the neighbours, making this the first double over Real in more than 60 years.

Real will always have Lisbon – the biggest derby of them all in the European Cup Final – but these days it is Atletico who rule Madrid.

Sid Lowe



On target...Atletico celebrate again

Boost...Reus' new deal gives Dortmund a lift

GERMANY

Nick Bidwell's Notes from the Bundesliga: Dortmund out of the relegation zone, Bayern hit Hamburg for eight

Dortmund's goalkeeper Roman Bürki is pictured in action during a match.



GERMANY

Borussia Dortmund general manager Michael Zorc claims Marco Reus' decision to extend his contract with his hometown club until 2019 has “unshackled” the wizard of the dribble.

And that definitely seemed the case as the spiky-haired forward netted one goal and made another in the 4-2 home victory over Mainz, a result which hauled Jurgen Klopp's side out of the relegation quicksand.

Happy to put speculation about a move to England or Spain on the back burner, Reus' deal has re-energised Dortmund in what has been a most difficult of seasons so far.

Nick Bidwell

Paddy Agnew

ITALY

The biggest name to leave Italian football in the transfer window was Sebastian Giovinco of Juventus and Italy, who moved to Toronto in the MLS.

The 5ft 5in Giovinco often suffered from critical reviews which suggested that – even if he is quick, skilful and gifted with terrific free-kick, passing and dribbling skills – he was too small and too light for the very highest level of football.

This was probably unfair criticism since, as his nickname, “*formica atomica*” (atomic ant) would indicate, in six Serie A seasons with Juventus, two with Parma and one with Empoli, he played some terrific football.

On top of that, lightweights –

metaphorical or physical – do not win 21 caps for Italy.

Perhaps somewhat handicapped by media acclamations that he would take over the mantle of Alessandro Del Piero, Giovinco vehemently denied that leaving Italian football at the age of 28 for the MLS represented a “failure”.

In an interview with *Gazzetta Dello Sport*, he said: “I won two titles with Juventus. I could have done more but things became strange. After a while, I was accused of only scoring unimportant goals...I am a professional and now I am going to give everything for Toronto.”

“I thank everyone at Juventus for some great years, but now I've got to start thinking of my future.”

Gone...Giovinco



New feature Weekly notes from Brazil, Spain, Germany and Italy at worldsoccer.com

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Jim HOLDEN

AT THE HEART OF THE GAME

For every Martin Odegaard, there's a Nii Lamptey

Martin Odegaard made his international debut for Norway a few months ago at the age of 15 years and 253 days. A couple of weeks after his 16th birthday he signed professional forms with Real Madrid, having been courted by almost every major club in Europe. The European champions instantly named Odegaard in their 25-man Champions League squad for this season, even though the schoolboy had yet to play a single minute for his new club.

Oh yes, the Scandinavian is the latest youngster to be launched into the unforgiving world of elite football, showered with praise and riches and great expectations when his peers are still in the classroom.

Is he living the dream, the prince who can become the king, like Pele and Diego Maradona? Or has the nightmare just begun, the kid whose sporting life will be destroyed by hype and hope delivered far too early? Those who fear the worst do so with heavy hearts.

It is not impossible that Odegaard possesses the temperament as well as the talent to blossom into one of the all-time greats of the game. After all, it does happen.

Pele was just 17 when he helped Brazil win the 1958 World Cup, scoring twice in the Final. Maradona made his professional debut 10 days before his 16th birthday, followed by a first international for Argentina. The rest is history.

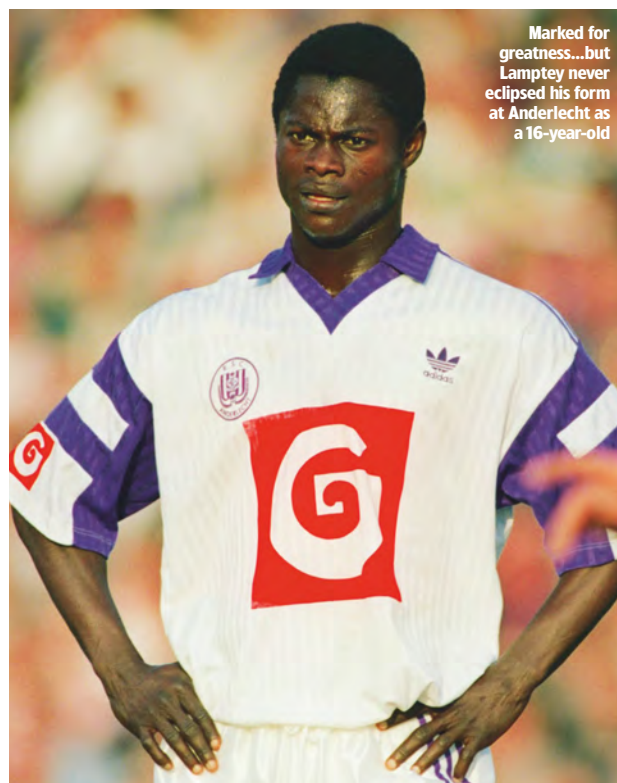
These, however, are the great exceptions. The unhappy reality is that the majority of wonderkids tend to fade swiftly from view.

I vividly recall an assignment more than two decades ago to write about a 16-year-old called Nii Lamptey who Pele had described as a certain superstar. He was already playing



Youthful dreams...Odegaard at Real Madrid

The unhappy reality is that wonderkids tend to fade swiftly from view



Marked for greatness...but Lamptey never eclipsed his form at Anderlecht as a 16-year-old

European Cup football for Anderlecht and the opposition manager at the match I saw, no less a sage than Bobby Robson, told me: "He will be enormous. He is pure talent"

Lamptey's career was at its peak there and then. It descended to hell as he journeyed around the globe without achievement, from England to Argentina to Germany, and finally home to his native Ghana.

I also recall being told over lunch one day about Freddy Adu, when the American lad was just 13. He was going to be dynamite and he won a professional contract with DC United at the age of 14. There was no doubt about it, he was a true wonderkid.

Today? Well, aged 25, he was recently released by Serbian club Jagodina, having previously failed to impress in Brazil, Norway and Holland. This is the well-trodden path.

Alex Ferguson is on record as saying the best 14-year-old he ever saw in his many years at Manchester United was Ravel Morrison. The troubled young English talent is now 22 and yet to convince a club to stick with him, his latest move taking him to Lazio after he was released by West Ham United.

Chelsea have had some impressive young

talent in the past few years, but without a single graduate to the first team. Remember Gael Kakuta and Josh McEachran?

Each story is its own, though it is impossible not to believe that receiving too much too soon – both in high praise and high wages – is a crushing burden.

A cynical view is that the way Chelsea's youth policy has progressed, where they have a stockpile of glorious promise, is not so much about the search for a new legend as selling players for a profit to help the club comply with UEFA's financial fairplay regulations.

If so, is that iniquitous if the players learn their trade on loan at good clubs and develop without the intense focus and monstrous expectations loaded onto Odegaard?

The overwhelming majority of young footballers do not become superstars, and a system with more realism and rationale might actually be good for them.

Certainly, the sight of Odegaard being hawked around the major clubs of Europe in a very public journey was not an easy sight for anyone who came across Lamptey as a young footballer and was told by the great and good he would be a hero for the ages. **WS**

“Along with Giuseppe Verdi, ham and cheese, this club is one of the symbols of this town and, as the latter is in trouble, we have a right to know what’s going on”

Parma mayor Federico Pizzarotti looks on aghast as the former Cup-winners Cup and UEFA Cup holders stagger to the financial brink



ITALY

Debt-ridden Parma on the brink

For the first time ever, a Serie A match was not played for bankruptcy-related reasons, with Parma's home game against Udinese on February 22 postponed.

With the Parma public prosecutor's office calling for the club to be declared bankrupt at a hearing on March 19, this is just the latest development in an ongoing crisis which has dragged on all season. But, essentially, it has its roots in the \$14billion crash of dairy multinational Parmalat SpA in 2003, the company which then owned Parma.

Deprived of the financial backing of a company which in 2002 was valued at €3.7bn and which employed 30,000 people in 30 countries, Parma were soon on a slippery downwards slope. In much more recent times, an alarm bell rang loud and clear last summer when UEFA refused to let Parma play in this season's Europa League, after they had finished sixth in Serie A last term, because of unpaid taxes.

Twice this season the heavily indebted club has changed hands, reportedly for

just one euro. Players and staff have received no wages since last July, an issue that became public knowledge when Italy striker Antonio Cassano asked for his contract to be rescinded in January.

At the moment, Parma do not have the money to pay electricity and gas bills, while €77,000 is owed to the company which provides match stewards. Given the unavailability of the latter for the game against Udinese, Parma had offered to play the match behind closed doors, but this idea was rejected by the players.

When Giampietro Manenti recently bought Parma from a Russian-Cypriot conglomerate headed by Albanian tycoon Rezart Taci, he said: "We're going to pay everything. It will be our duty to respect the deadlines, both of taxes and salaries. We are going to try to get other Italian and foreign companies on board."

So far, there has been no sign of a cash injection. Manenti was on his way to Slovenia when bailiffs arrived at the club's training ground to seize several of the club's vehicles against unpaid taxes. The

lack of funds prompted exasperated Parma city Mayor Federico Pizzarotti to comment: "Parma is a Serie A football club not a salami shop. If you don't have the money in an Italian bank to cover immediate costs, then there must be somebody behind this [purchase]".

Pizzarotti, the Italian Football Federation and the club are attempting to find a short-term solution which will help Parma see out the season. It may be that, if and when the club is declared officially bankrupt, that the Football Federation and the Serie A Lega will step in and guarantee the estimated €5m which would see the team through to June.

Parma captain Alessandro Lucarelli has been highly critical of the federation's role in the Parma crisis, telling *La Gazzetta dello Sport*: "The Lega and the Federation only turned up here to see how things were going. How come they allowed the club to twice change hands for just one euro, that's ridiculous. In this business, the authorities have protected no one."

If Parma are declared bankrupt and excluded from the rest of the season, all teams with games still to play against Parma will be awarded a 3-0 win.

Paddy Agnew

Owner...Manenti



Problems...Parma are bottom of Serie A and in financial trouble





“Such people are like animals and animals are difficult to tame”

Borussia Monchengladbach sports director Max Eberl calls for prison sentences to be handed out after Cologne hooligans in boiler suits run amok at a recent Bundesliga game

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE Appointments, sackings and loans

IN



New...Sherwood

EUROPE

■ **SERGIO MARKARIAN**, who has been in charge of Paraguay and Peru's national sides in the past, was appointed coach of Greece.

■ Former Czechoslovakia and Czech Republic midfielder **PAVEL HAPAL** was named coach of Slovakia's under-21 side.

■ **TIM SHERWOOD** replaced Paul Lambert as manager of Aston Villa after they dropped into the Premier League relegation zone, while **CHRIS RAMSEY** was named caretaker boss of QPR after Harry Redknapp quit.

■ **JOSE RIGA**, sacked by English side Blackpool in October, was re-hired by Belgium's Standard Liege.

■ **MARTIN SCHMIDT** replaced Kasper Hjulmand as coach of Bundesliga strugglers Mainz.

SOUTH AMERICA

■ Emelec coach **GUSTAVO QUINTEROS** will leave his club job to take charge of Ecuador's national side in March.



Belgium bound...Jose Riga

CONCACAF

■ **ANDREAS HERZOG**, who scored 26 goals in 103 internationals and is Austria's most-capped player, was named coach of USA's under-23s.

■ Caretaker coach **PAULO WANCHEPE** was appointed permanent boss of Costa Rica, taking over from Jorge Luis Pinto, who led the team to the World Cup quarter-finals last year.

■ **ANTONIO MOHAMED**, who took America to the Mexican apertura title two months ago, was appointed coach of Monterrey.

ASIA

■ Australia international **TIM CAHILL** joined Shanghai Shenhua of China after his contract with MLS side New York Red Bulls was terminated by mutual consent.

■ Saudi Arabian side Al Shabab signed Ismail's Ghanaian striker **JOHN ANTWI**, who was this season's top scorer in Egypt.

■ Costa Rica winger **CHRISTIAN BOLANOS**, who played in all five 2014 World Cup games for his country, joined Al Gharafa of Qatar.

■ Bulgarian **VELIZAR POPOV** was named Maldives' national coach.

■ **SHIN TAE-YONG**, who was assistant coach as South Korea reached the 2015 Asian Cup Final, took over the country's under-23 side, replacing Lee Kwang-jong, who had to step down because of illness.

EUROPE

■ Hertha Berlin dismissed coach **JOS LUHUKAY** after three successive Bundesliga defeats.

■ Former Portugal international **RICARDO SA PINTO** resigned as coach of Greek Super League side Atromitos.

■ Kilmarnock manager **ALLAN JOHNSTON** was relieved of his duties immediately, having previously announced that he would quit the Scottish Premier League club at the end of the season.

■ Former Ukraine and Liverpool forward **ANDRIY VORONIN**, who had been without a club since leaving Dynamo Moscow at the end of last season, has retired at the age of 35.

SOUTH AMERICA

■ Colon sacked coach **REINALDO MERLO** after they lost 2-0 away to San Lorenzo in their first game of the new Argentinian Primera season.

AFRICA

■ Senegal coach **ALAIN GIRESE**, Burkina Faso's **PAUL PUT** and **MICHEL DUSSUYER** of Guinea all left their posts following the African Nations Cup.

■ Algeria captain **MADJID BOUGHERRA** and Ivory Coast's African Nations Cup winning defender **KOLO TOURE**, who are both 33, called time on their international careers.

ASIA

■ Japan terminated the contract of national coach **JAVIER AGUIRRE** after the Asian Cup.

■ Al Hilal dismissed coach **LAURENTIU REGHECAMPF** less than 10 days before the Saudi Arabian club started their AFC Champions League campaign.

OUT



Hanging up his boots...Voronin



Stamford Bridge recruit...Cuadrado

Big deals for Chelsea

■ Chelsea were the biggest traders in the January transfer window, bringing in **JUAN CUADRADO** from Fiorentina for an initial £23.3m and selling **ANDRE SCHURRLE** to Wolfsburg for £24m. For all the transfer-window moves in Europe's big five leagues, go to <http://po.st/MbzY8m>

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Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL



Romance is not dead

Hallelujah! The FA Cup lives! This despite the ineptitude of a Football Association which hasn't even managed to find it a sponsor. Have heads rolled at Wembley? What do you think?

Bradford City's astonishing victory over the supposedly unbeatable Chelsea and their flamboyant manager, after actually going two goals down, was historic, and by contrast with the subsequent defeat of Sunderland at Valley Parade, in a game in which no quarter was asked or given, was acquired through sheer fine football.

The romance of Bradford City's success has been embodied in the triumphs and the profusion of goals – at least one in every Cup match – of their centre-forward, Jon Stead. Revenge is sweet and especially so for Stead, who in a previous unhappy spell at Sunderland failed to

score until his 30th game, having been signed for £1.8million fully 10 years ago from Blackburn Rovers. Mocking T-shirts were worn by Sunderland supporters.

All too recently, exiguous crowds at FA Cup games suggested the competition might be in terminal decline. Looking at attendance figures of the fifth-round weekend, everywhere but Blackburn Rovers – themselves spectacular conquerors of Stoke City, but in front of a mere 13,934 fans – there is clearly life in the old cup yet. It is the mother of all competitions, preceding the Football League which was founded years after because professional clubs needed a guaranteed fixture list.

By contrast the League Cup, which might be subtitled “Hardaker's Revenge” is a mere upstart. Alan Hardaker, Mr Anti-Europe, founded it when secretary of the Football League as a rival to the FA Cup. Initially it bumped along as a marginal

Revenge... Stead (right) celebrates with Bradford City team-mate Gary Little after scoring against his old club, Sunderland

midweek home-and-away tournament; until Hardaker managed to place its Final at Wembley with a quite illogical place for the winners in the predecessor to the UEFA Cup.

In these days of far too many fixtures, I am disappointed the League Cup, under the latest of its infinite aliases, still exists. Hardaker, you may remember, bullied Chelsea out of taking part in the original European Cup and tried in vain next season to do the same to Manchester United. Matt Busby would have none of it, but when UEFA charitably offered United a place in the tournament months after the Munich air crash, Hardaker managed, at a third ugly attempt, to veto the idea.

Bradford City's victory over the supposedly unbeatable Chelsea and their flamboyant manager was historic



Happier times at Valley Parade

Bradford City's game against Sunderland was watched by a crowd of 24,021 – a seated record for Valley Parade, the scene of an appalling disaster on May 11, 1985, at a game versus Lincoln City, where they were presented with the Third Division Championship trophy before the match.

Just before half-time, fire broke out in the 77-year-old wooden stand, setting it ablaze within five minutes. The iron doors below the stand were of no use to the panicking supporters as they had been

Packed...more than 24,000 were at Valley Parade to watch Bradford City play Sunderland, but the ground has a tragic history

inexplicably locked and 56 fans were burned to death, with another 200 injured.

Shamefully and scandalously, it transpired that this had been a tragedy in waiting. Beneath the ancient stand piles of rubbish had accumulated. The council knew of it, the club knew of it and were duly warned. The club then did nothing, the council unforgivably did nothing either. So some old fool dropped a lighted cigarette end through a gap in the stand's floor and up it went.

For reasons beyond understanding, there is no record of either club or council being arraigned and punished.

Backing for Wilshere up in smoke

Roy Hodgson is a figure I have long admired. But he makes the occasional faux pas.

He hardly deserved to be caught out over the Manaus affair, when before the World Cup draw he expressed the hope that England would not be obliged to play in the jungle. Well, they were, and Roy had to make embarrassing apologies to local dignitaries. Then there was the kerfuffle over initially resting the Liverpool prodigy Raheem Sterling earlier this season from an international match.

And now it's Jack Wilshere flourishing a so-called shisha pipe in a London nightclub.

Roy publicly and promptly defended him, insisting there was nothing to it, that he had smoked a shisha pipe in the past with no obvious effects.

"I thought tobacco was smoking and shisha pipes were water with flavour", he explained. Nicotine? He wasn't sure about it. "I thought it was a complete nonsense. I couldn't understand who would do it.

"Apart from a faint fruit taste in your



Support...Hodgson (left) and Wilshere



Confident...Blatter

mouth, that was about the end of it"

But then the British Heart Foundation commented: "Some people mistakenly think that shisha smoking is not addictive because the water used in the pipe can absorb nicotine. In reality, because only some of the nicotine is absorbed in the water, shisha smokers are still exposed to enough nicotine to cause an addiction.

"Even if you use tobacco-free shisha, you're still at risk from the carbon monoxide and any toxins in the coal or charcoal used to burn the shisha."

Game set and match, I feel.

Blatter bound to win

Sepp Blatter now has a group of distinguished figures arraigned against him for the coming FIFA presidential election.

But since he has all the usual African states lined up on his side – and one of his supporters doesn't even have the backing of his own federation – I cannot believe that he is losing much sleep.

All change at QPR

Addio, then, Harry Redknapp. Or is it merely au revoir? Harry "Houdini," supreme escapologist, has quit a struggling Queens Park Rangers, blaming two crippled legs. He swears he will be back and who knows, maybe he will. After all, this is a man who so triumphantly beat the rap in court when the cards seemed stacked ominously against him.

Accused of malfeasance with money in a Monaco account, he was so fiercely attacked by prosecuting counsel that he protested aloud. Yet in the breathless event, and to the joy of his infinite admirers, Harry was cleared by the jury, whose verdict, not that of the presiding judge, was paramount.

Over the years he has made a huge sum of money, with the impressive house in expensive Sandbanks to prove it. He hates being called a wheeler-dealer, but at West Ham United, particularly in his final spell, a revolving door seemed to be forever turning.

This season at QPR, he fell out furiously with the gifted but erratic Morocco attacker Adel Taarabt. I was at the post-match press conference after the home defeat by Hull City when he furiously upbraided Taarabt for being allegedly and vastly overweight. Harry may well have been right, but it seemed at the time a two-edged sword. Taarabt replied with



More to come...Redknapp claims he'll be back

equal anger and equally in public, meaning that, for better or worse, the player was virtually lost to the cause.

At the same press conference Harry declared the veteran Rio Ferdinand had given a masterclass in defending. In fact, it was his failure to mark his man at a corner which had given Hull their winning goal.

Chris Ramsey, the coach who took over, surprisingly omitted Bobby Zamora, whose goal had given QPR that astounding shock win in last season's Wembley play-off, from the game lost at the death at home to Southampton, leaving Charlie Austin isolated up front. For the ensuing game at Sunderland, with Austin out injured, Zamora returned to volley a sensational goal. Ramsey was then confirmed in office for the remainder of a difficult season. **WS**

● [Read Brian Glanville's exclusive online column at worldsoccer.com](http://www.worldsoccer.com)



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Love||soccer 

LOCAL HERO

WORDS: Gerry Cox, John Holmesdale

The emergence of Harry Kane this season has been a triumph of homegrown talent over expensive foreign signings

Timeline

Gets first-team call-up and is on the bench for Spurs' League Cup tie with Everton.

OCT 27, 2009

Scores two goals for England under-19s as they beat Albania 6-1 in a European Championship qualifier.

OCT 8, 2010

Joins League One club Leyton Orient on loan for the remainder of the season.

JAN 7, 2011

Makes his debut for Leyton Orient as a 73rd-minute sub in a 1-1 draw at Rochdale.

JAN 15, 2011

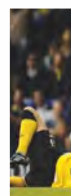


Scores his first senior goal, in Leyton Orient's 4-0 win over Sheffield Wednesday.

JAN 22, 2011

Makes his Spurs debut in a Europa League tie at home to Hearts, in which he earns a penalty but then misses the spot-kick.

AUG 25, 2011





Scores his first goal for Tottenham, in a 4-0 Europa League win away to Shamrock Rovers.

DEC 15, 2011



Plays his first game on loan for Millwall, but is on the losing side, going down 1-0 away to Bristol City.

JAN 3, 2012



Makes his Premier League debut, as a sub, in Tottenham's 2-1 defeat at Newcastle on the opening day of the season.

AUG 18, 2012

The Europa League may have yet to find a place in the hearts of most football supporters, but the unloved competition has helped Tottenham Hotspur to unearth their brightest young star for many years.

Back in August, Crystal Palace were among the clubs who enquired about taking Harry Kane on loan for the season. He had already spent time out on loan at four other English league clubs and was making slow but steady progress to the fringes of Spurs' first team.

New head coach Mauricio Pochettino blocked the request. The Argentinian had arrived from Southampton with a reputation for bleeding youth-team products. But he was reluctant to use Kane in Premier League games; instead, he wanted to see how Kane and other promising youngsters performed on Thursday nights in Europe.

Fast forward six months and 21-year-old Kane has made the rapid transition from Europa League hopeful to Premier League starter.

By the start of November 2014, Pochettino was still yet to be convinced that Kane should start ahead of regular strikers Roberto Soldado and Emmanuel Adebayor, and the youngster had made only five Premier League appearances, all as substitute. But then he was given the



Ours...Spurs fans see Kane as one of their own

Rivals...with Arsenal

chance to start – and to score.

Having scored freely in the cup, Kane finally began to find the net in the Premier League, and by March 2015 he had scored 24 goals in all competitions, including impressive strikes in victories over Chelsea and Arsenal.

Having played for England at every level from under-17 through to under-21, a first

senior call-up was widely anticipated for England's March internationals against Lithuania and Italy.

The plaudits have come thick and fast. Les Ferdinand, having observed Kane from close quarters, believes "he can go right to the top. I would compare his football intelligence with Teddy Sheringham and his finishing with Alan Shearer. Like Alan, Harry has real power in his shooting and heading."

Ferdinand has watched Kane develop from a skinny teenager to a physically imposing centre-forward. "I worked with Harry when he was a young lad and could

see straightaway that he was a goalscorer – left foot, right foot, head – he could finish anyway you wanted.

"The only thing that I thought might hold him back was his lack of pace at the time. We used to make comparisons with Teddy, who never had great pace but was a terrific finisher and had real football intelligence, which allowed him to play as



Impressive...in action against Croatia in the Euro under-21 play-offs

"We always thought Harry Kane was going to be a top player"

Ex-Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp



a number 10 or a number nine.

"It is the same with Harry. I call him a nine-and-a-half because he can play up front or he can drop off, play deeper and make things happen. When I worked with him on the training ground, I would use Teddy as an example of how he could operate. I'd say: 'It's not just about scoring, but creating goals too'.

"He was a very good learner, always willing to listen and do what he needed to do to improve. He believed in the ability he had and will work on the areas that need to be worked on. He has certainly done that with his speed, and has worked to find that extra yard of pace that he has now. Nobody could say he lacks pace now."

Kane's emergence has been a triumph for youth over experience, as well as for homegrown talent over expensive overseas signings.

A local lad, born in nearby Walthamstow, Kane was brought up in a family of Spurs fans – even if he did

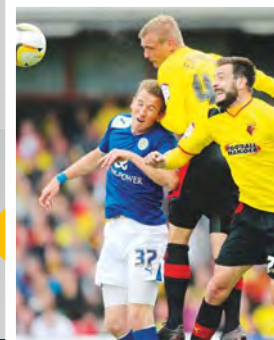
Two weeks after his Premier League debut, he is sent out on loan again, to fellow Premier League club Norwich City.

In his second game for Norwich, he is stretchered off against Doncaster Rovers after breaking a bone in his foot.



Having recovered from injury and been recalled by Tottenham, he joins Leicester City on loan and scores on his home debut.

Despite winning the first leg 1-0, Leicester are beaten 3-1 by Watford in the return in the play-off semi-finals.



spend a year in the youth section of north London rivals Arsenal.

Tottenham's fans have been quick to adopt him, having seen a succession of failures by the imports signed with the proceeds of Gareth Bale's sale to Real Madrid in 2013. Disillusioned with Adebayor and Soldado, they loved Kane for being homegrown. "He's one of our own," went the chant, and Kane admitted it was strange to hear.

"It's great to hear the fans sing my name, but it's strange," he said. "It doesn't seem so long ago that I was one of them, standing in the crowd singing the names of Teddy Sheringham and Robbie Keane – they were my heroes then."

With most Premier League managers reluctant to risk throwing young players into the deep end of the Premier League, Kane's rapid rise has also offered proof of the value of young players spending time

Loan...playing for Orient, against Peterborough



on loan in the lower divisions.

Harry Redknapp was Tottenham's manager when Kane emerged from the club's academy teams. In typical hyperbole, Redknapp claimed recently that the English loan system was the "best in the world".

Redknapp added: "We had him as a youngster and let him go out on loan a few times because we thought that was what he needed. He has turned out really well. He's not a 'big-time Charlie', he wants to work at his game, wants to practise and he wants to be a proper player."

Leyton Orient, in England's third tier and a club close to his home in East London, was the first port of call for the 17-year-old. He scored five goals in 18 appearances, earning positive reviews for his performances as a second striker

Scores in England's 1-1 draw with Chile in the Under-20 World Cup in Turkey.

Scores a hat-trick for England under-21s away to San Marino.



Scores his first Premier League goal as Spurs beat Sunderland 5-1.

Europe's young starlets

While Kane lights up the Premier League, here are the youngsters who have been impressing in Europe's other top leagues



Selke ▶

▶ DAVIE SELKE (Werder Bremen)

The word is that the striker will be the long-term successor to Miroslav Klose at the point of the *Nationalmannschaft* attack and it's easy to see why.

This season, his first full campaign as a Bundesliga starter, the son of an Ethiopian father and German mother has constantly caught the eye with his pace, strength, presence and composed finishing and was especially impressive against Borussia Dortmund in December, scoring in his side's 2-1 win.

He was the star turn in Germany's triumph at last year's European Under-19 Championship, netting six times to claim the top scorer prize.



Jeannot ▶

▶ BENJAMIN JEANNOT (Lorient)

Bought from Nancy for €1 million last summer, the 23-year-old has made a remarkable start to life as a Ligue 1 regular, emerging as the Breton club's top scorer this term and linking well up front with the Ghanaian Jordan Ayew.

Sharp in the box, mobile and hard working, he loves to run at defences from deep and notably struck with a brilliant overhead kick against Nice recently.

The youngest-ever professional at Nancy, he made his debut for them aged only 16. He is a former French under-21 international



Vietto ▶

▶ LUCIANO VIETTO (Villarreal)

La Liga's player of the month for December last year, the Argentinian front man has not stopped scoring since quitting Racing for Villarreal last August.

The 21-year-old's outstanding right-footed finishing – already on target 11 times – has frequently proved a godsend for his side and it speaks volumes for his class and maturity that he has settled down in Europe so quickly, even managing more rookie season goals in Spain than the likes of Neymar and Aguero.

A baby-faced assassin if ever there was one, he is rumoured to be on the Real Madrid shopping list.



Lacazette ▶

▶ ALEXANDRE LACAZETTE (Lyon)

The 23-year-old leads the Ligue 1 goalscoring charts and has been the key factor in Lyon's surge to the top of the table. See Club Focus, page 38.



Dybala ▶

▶ PAULO DYBALA (Palermo)

During his side's surprise 3-1 drubbing of Napoli, the 21-year-old Argentinian produced the sort of performance that explains just why observers are predicting a big future for him. He gave their central defence of Uruguay's Miguel Britos and former Real Madrid player Raul Albiol a torrid time, playing a pivotal role in setting up goals for compatriot Franco Vazquez and Luca Rigoni.

Mobile, beautifully balanced, he appears to have everything. He reads the game well, passes well and is not frightened to take on his defender.

Cost €12m in the summer of 2012, so if and when he moves on from the Sicilian club, as seems likely sooner or later, then his asking price is sure to be hefty.



JUN 26, 2013

OCT 10, 2013

APR 7, 2014

► before returning to Spurs where he appeared in the Europa League.

He was off to second-tier side Millwall in January 2012 and impressed in his short time there, winning the club's young player of the year award. "He has fitted in very well despite only being here half a season," said the club's manager Kenny Jackett. "I felt he came here as a boy and is a man now – and plays like a man on the pitch."

Kane made his first Premier League appearance, as a substitute in the final day of the 2012-13 season against Newcastle. But any hopes that he might be among the plans of new Spurs manager Andre Villas-Boas were dashed when he was sent on loan to Norwich, where he suffered a metatarsal injury that restricted his impact. A further loan at Championship side Leicester in the second half of the campaign was also less than satisfactory, with Kane used from the bench as City reached the play-offs only to fall in the semi-finals to Watford.

Back at Spurs for 2013-14 season, Kane was used as a substitute in Europa League and other cup games, when regular strikers Adebayor or Soldado



"Harry has a strong mentality, and I'll take that attitude over ability all day. He has had to be strong, and had to fight. The fans haven't always sung his name. He had to earn that."

But he had to start all over again the following season in order to convince Sherwood's successor Pochettino that he could be trusted in the top flight. His progress over the past six months has been extraordinary. Kane has to pinch

Trust...with Spurs boss Pochettino

himself sometimes that he has made such great strides in less than a year.

"Yes, 2014 was a great year for me, you could say it was my breakthrough year. I got my chance at Spurs and was able to take it. It is certainly a year I won't forget.

"This season has been going well for me and hopefully I can continue in that vein of form. We have a game plan that involves pressing high up the pitch so it's hard work, but we all want to be involved. Any striker will tell you that when you are scoring goals you just want to keep playing as much as possible."

Kane has benefited from extra fitness work, both on the training ground with the rest of the squad doing double training sessions, and also individually in the gym, beefing up his physique.

"I've done a lot of gym work, especially in pre-season, and I think I've just developed as I've got older as well," he said. "My muscles have got bigger and I've grown a bit as well. I've definitely got fitter and stronger in the last year or so and it's helped my game."

A new five-and-a-half-year contract has also strengthened his commitment to Spurs. Talk of him being scouted by Real Madrid may sound fanciful, for now. But playing in the Europa League may be the least of Harry Kane's future worries if his rapid career rise continues. **WS**

"2014 was a great year for me, you could say it was my breakthrough year"

Harry Kane

On target...against Leicester City

were rested. He looked a little slow and cumbersome, and there were plenty of Tottenham supporters who thought he would be the latest youth product who would find success elsewhere.

But Tim Sherwood, who had observed Kane's progress as head of the Tottenham youth set-up, gave him a chance when he took over from Villas-Boas. And when he finally began to start in Premier League games, he started to score. His full Premier League debut came against Sunderland in April 2014, and he scored in a 5-1 victory. Kane then scored in the following two games to make it three goals in his first three Premier League starts.

Sherwood, never short of an opinion, was quick to take credit for giving Kane his head and blocking another loan move at the start of his brief tenure as Tottenham manager. "The club wanted to loan him out again, but I resisted and if I hadn't done, he wouldn't be the player he is now. You have to believe in the kids. If they are good enough, put them in the team.



Scores his first Spurs hat-trick in a 5-1 win against Asteras Tripoli. He ends the game in goal after Hugo Lloris is sent off.



Scores twice as Tottenham thrash league leaders Chelsea 5-3 at White Hart Lane.

Another brace, this time in the north London derby as Tottenham come from a goal down to beat Arsenal 2-1 at home.



Harry KANE



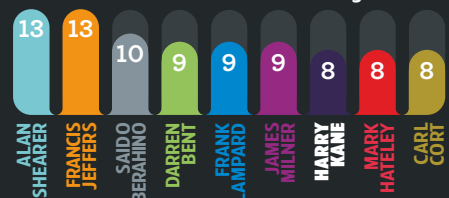
the numbers game


ENGLAND U21s

10/8

CAPS
GOALS

ENGLAND U21s

All-time leading scorers


SPANISH EYES

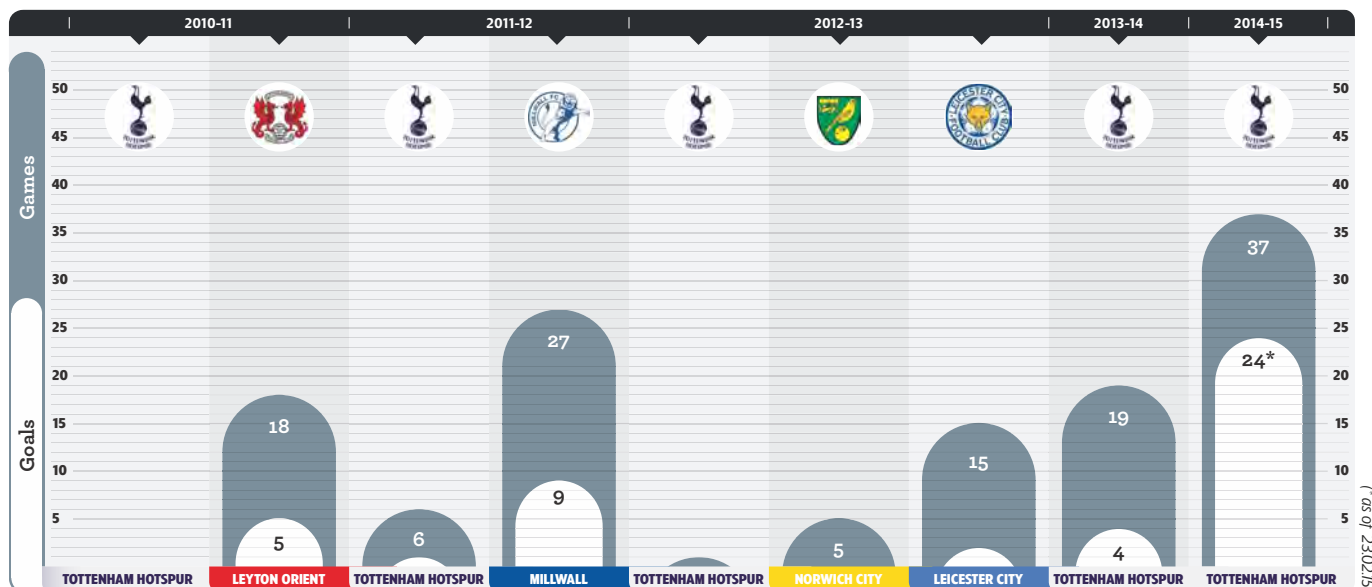
Real Madrid scouts have been seen at White Hart Lane this season and the Spanish giants could try to reunite Kane with former Spurs stars Luka Modric and Gareth Bale this summer.

PLAYER OF THE MONTH

PREMIER LEAGUE 2014-15 SEASON

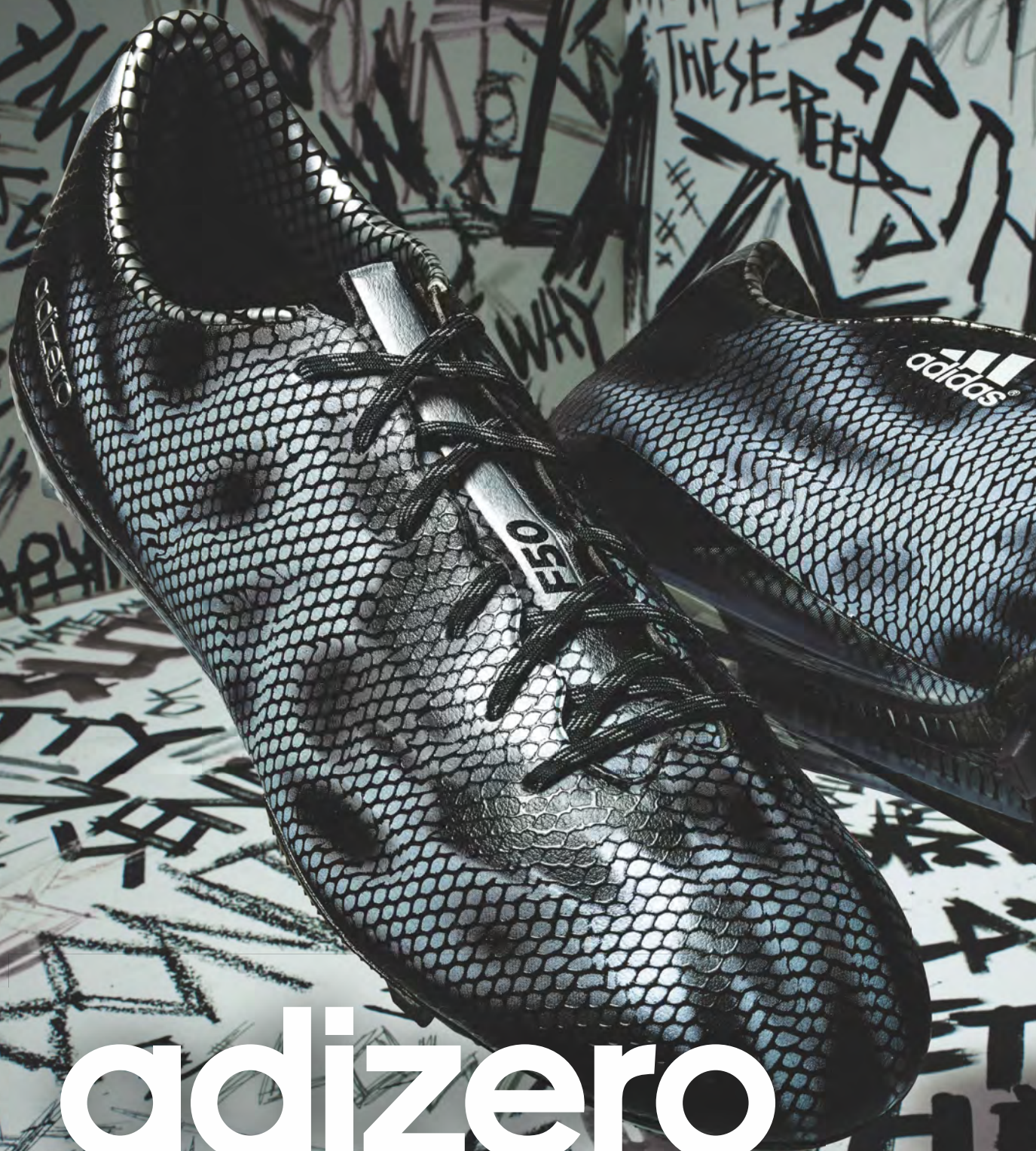
AUGUST 2014	DIEGO COSTA (Chelsea)
SEPTEMBER 2014	GRAZIANO PELLE (Southampton)
OCTOBER 2014	DIAFRA SAKHO (West Ham)
NOVEMBER 2014	SERGIO AGUIERO (Man City)
DECEMBER 2014	CHARLIE AUSTIN (QPR)
JANUARY 2015	HARRY KANE (Tottenham)

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Efficiency takes hold in Africa

Ivory Coast's African Nations Cup victory was a triumph for Herve Renard's pragmatism, says Jonathan Wilson



This, said Claude Le Roy, the coach of Congo and participating in his eighth African Nations Cup, was the most tactically intriguing tournament he had known – which sounded worryingly like confirmation of the theory that “tactically intriguing” is a euphemism for “low scoring”.

External factors have to be taken into account, of course, and the extreme heat, humidity and indifferent pitches in three of the venues perhaps diminished the thrill of much of the football. But what Equatorial Guinea 2015 seemed to demonstrate was the ongoing “Renardisation” of African football.

It was Joseph-Antoine Bell, the former Cameroon goalkeeper and now an outspoken radio pundit, who identified the trend. He pointed out that Zambia lost 5-1 to Cameroon in 2008 and 3-2 to them in 2010 and then, in 2012, won the

tournament while Cameroon failed to qualify. “They had long-term planning and they had a philosophy that led them to play well, so they knew what they had to do with the ball, how they were playing,” said Bell. “They knew what they had to do.”

Zambia had no stars in the side that won the continental title in 2012 – their most feted player was Christopher Katongo, who at the time was playing in China for Henan Construction – but they did have Herve Renard, a coach who seems to have a tremendous capacity for inspiring respect from his players.

With Zambia he produced a team who played disciplined, intelligent football that maximised their strengths. Zambia finished the 2012 tournament with the poorest pass-completion stats of any side, but that was because they focused on winning the ball back and getting it forward quickly.

Solid...Kolo Toure heads clear as Ivory Coast repel an Algeria attack in the quarter-finals

They had the confidence in their defence to allow the opposition possession; far more important to them than keeping the ball was counter-attacking and exploiting the pace of Rainford Kalaba on the left.

This year, Renard's Ivory Coast were a little less bluntly pragmatic, but not much. The failures and near-misses of the past decade had altered the perspective.

This was still a hugely talented squad, arguably the best in the competition, featuring the Toures, Wilfried Bony, Gervinho and Serge Aurier, but the

“They had a philosophy that led them to play well, so they knew what they had to do with the ball”

Radio pundit and ex-Cameroon goalkeeper Joseph-Antoine Bell on Renard's 2012 Zambia

Running free...Gervinho celebrates his goal against Algeria



perception was of an Ivorian side less gifted than some that had gone before. There was no Didier Drogba, no Didier Zokora and no Emmanuel Eboue, while Salomon Kalou had faded to the bench. And with the squad no longer perceived to be the golden generation, perhaps there was no onus on them to play golden football, thereby legitimising Renard's pragmatism.

It took time for Ivory Coast to play their way into this year's tournament. They were poor in their opener against Guinea, saved only by a late equaliser from Seydou Doumbia after Gervinho had been sent off. It was after they had gone down to 1-0 men, though, that Renard switched to a back three, with Kolo Toure sweeping and the highly promising pairing of Wilfried Kanon and Eric Bailly marking in front of him. As their penalties in the Final shoot-out demonstrated, both are technically good and extremely confident.

While Bailly conceded the penalty in the semi-final, and was perhaps partly to blame for Algeria's goal in the quarter-final, his willingness to carry the ball out of defence was a major benefit. Other than the last 25 minutes against Algeria, Renard stuck with his back three thereafter.

The shape, though, was probably less significant than the style and there was little flamboyance. Needing to beat Cameroon in their final group game to be sure of qualification, they took the lead and then sat back and absorbed pressure, with two of their three central midfielders sitting deep to provide an extra curtain of protection.

It was in the Algeria game that the policy really paid off, though. "In terms of football, ball skills, Algeria were better than

us," Renard said after a 3-1 win. "We must be clear with ourselves and find the most effective tactic against a team that plays on the ground and make the best use of set-pieces. It's not our fault if Algeria has not been good in this area."

Ivory Coast frustrated Algeria, and beat them thanks to two Bony headers from set-plays and an injury-time goal on the break, set up by a charge down the right from Junior Tallo and converted by Gervinho.

As somebody at his best when he doesn't have to think too much, Gervinho revelled in the system as, essentially, all he had to do was keep running between the eight outfielders that Ivory Coast often had behind the ball. Bony, meanwhile, led the



Key man...Katongo played a lead role in Zambia's 2012 team

line with uncompromising muscularity. It was a step up from how Zambia played – Ivory Coast have a much more talented squad – but the theory behind it was the same.

But it is not just Renard's teams that have started to play like this.

Two years ago, when Nigeria finally ended their 18-year wait for the title, it was with a side devoid of stars that had been drilled impeccably by coach Stephen Keshi, who had repeatedly dropped his biggest names to encourage obedience to his plans. In the Final, they beat a resolute Burkina Faso, who conceded just three goals in the tournament.

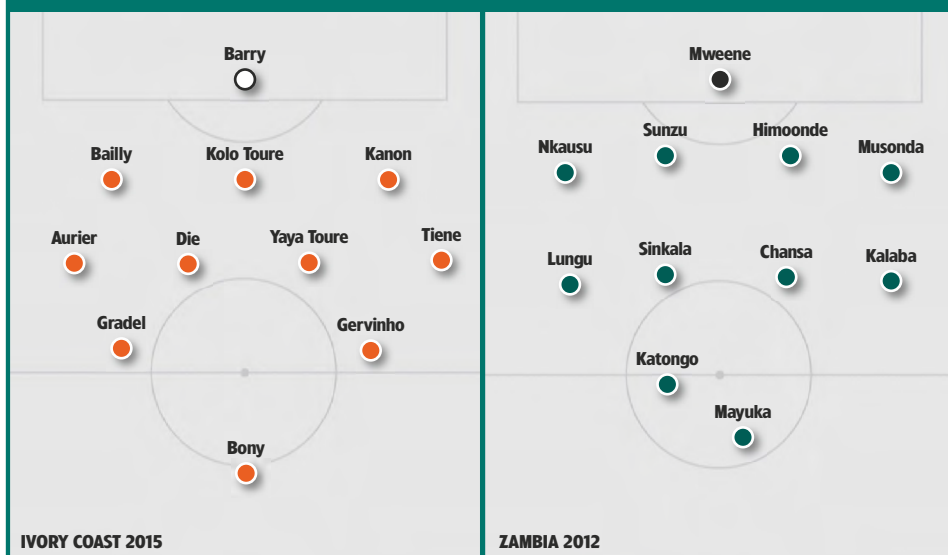
Even three years before that, when Ghana reached the Final before being beaten by Egypt, it was after Milovan Rajevac had dropped Sulley Muntari and Michael Essien.

This, it seems, is the future; in west Africa at least. The coach has taken control to the extent that Renard has become the first man to win the tournament with two different nations, and the star players have lost their autonomy. African Nations Cups are now being won not by brilliant individuals but by the best collective. It may not be as thrilling as the football of the eighties and nineties, but efficiency has taken hold. **WS**



Emotional...Renard became the first coach to win with two different nations

HOW RENARD SET UP HIS AFRICAN NATIONS CUP WINNERS







Renaissance movement

WORDS: HOWARD JOHNSON

Lyon are showing they can live without a sugar daddy as they aim to restore the glory days

When, in 2011, Qatar Sports Investments put their hand in their pocket and pulled out a roll of banknotes big enough to buy 70 per cent of the shares in Paris Saint-Germain, everyone knew that French domestic football would never be the same again.

The arrival of foreign money – big

money, supersized money – in the French capital was, quite literally, game-changing. In an instant, PSG had leapfrogged into the realms of Europe's footballing elite, leaving the rest of France's major clubs looking like paupers – and with some difficult decisions to make. Would it be worth the risk of investing yet more cash in outfits that were already creaking under

Pointing the way...
Gourcuff (centre)
celebrates scoring
against Marseille, with
N'Jie (left) and Bisevac

► the weight of unsustainable business models just so they might challenge PSG? Maybe. But even then, would huge injections of finance genuinely allow these clubs to be truly competitive against the Qataris? Would the value of TV rights ever increase enough to deliver big rewards and make such a gamble pay off?

Monaco's super-rich fertilizer mogul Dmitry Rybolovlev – probably no match for the Qataris, but blessed with extraordinarily deep pockets all the same – decided to pick up the gauntlet. But he was on his own. The only other French clubs with the kind of profile and level of support even to imagine scaling such giddy heights – Marseille and Lyon – politely declined.

For Jean-Michel Aulas, Lyon's tough old battle-hardened president, this decision must have been particularly hard to swallow. In charge since 1987, the 65-year-old had, after all, presided over an era of unprecedented success for "Les Gones" in the 2000s and would never take kindly to the idea of Lyon simply rolling over for anyone.

Founded in 1950, for a long time Lyon were not exactly one of French football's leading lights. Their first trophy, the French Cup, was won in 1964, and they had never once won the league before the Aulas era – their last silverware before his arrival,



Keeping the faith... fans' banners celebrate 1987: the year Aulas bought the club

Jean-Michel Aulas would never take kindly to the idea of Lyon simply rolling over for anyone



again the French Cup, had been lifted way back in 1973.

After taking on a club crippled by debt and languishing in the French second division initially simply "to help out", Aulas used his undoubted business savvy to haul Lyon out of obscurity and into the limelight.

A run of seven successive Ligue 1 titles between 2002 and 2008 put the club at the very heart of the domestic football map. Top players such as Juninho, Florent Malouda, Gregory Coupet and Karim Benzema, meanwhile, allowed Aulas to dream that maybe, just maybe, Lyon had

it in them to become a European force as well.

But when those Qataris upped the ante in 2011, Aulas was forced to rethink his strategy. Realising the kind of money that was now needed to play with the big boys, he took a reality check. Lyon, after all, wasn't Paris, with all of the cachet associated with the glamorous French capital. Nor did Aulas have the kind of footballing/business infrastructure that would allow him to build up some serious cash himself.

There had long been talk of moving from Stade Gerland and building a new,

state-of-the-art stadium, OL Land, complete with the usual revenue-generating hotel and conference facilities, since as far back as 2007. The Stade des Lumieres was supposed to have been completed by 2010. But plans had foundered on the back of political infighting and the objections – mainly based round air and noise-pollution issues, of local residents in the Decines-Charpieu area. By 2011 no construction permit had even been signed.

Continuing the fight for the new stadium to see the light of day was essential to the future wellbeing of the club. But pouring millions into the Lyon team at the same time in the hope of duking it out with PSG was way too risky a strategy, even for a gambler like Aulas. Such a move would have potentially threatened Lyon's entire future as a club.

There was really only one sensible decision for Aulas to take. Much as it ►

Champion...Aulas celebrates as the club clinch the 2008 Ligue 1 title at Auxerre

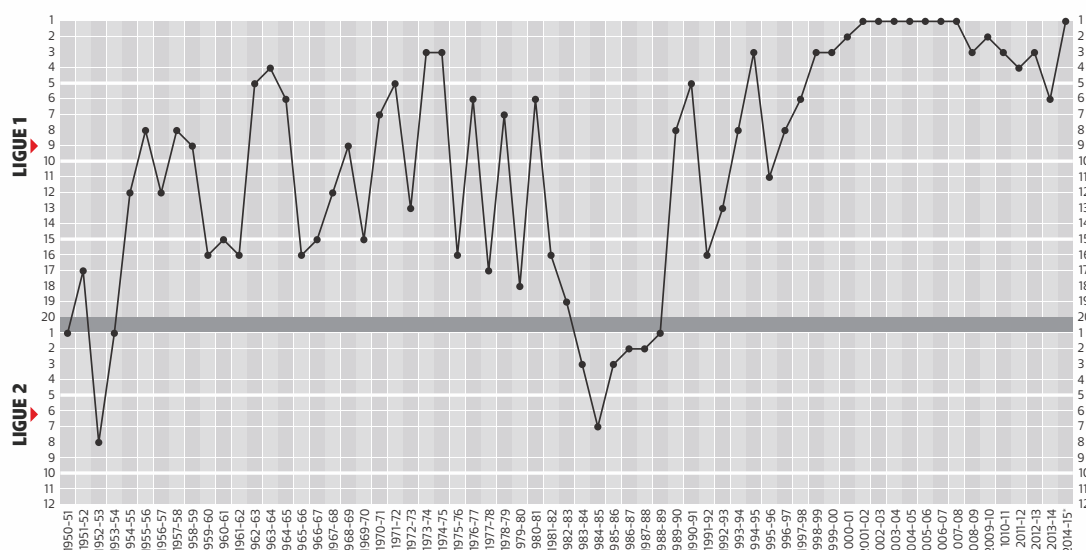


Star academy pupil...Benzema

Bright future...Fekir, a Lyon academy graduate, drives through the Paris Saint-Germain defence



LYON LEAGUE RECORD FROM 1950



HONOURS

- LIGUE 1 CHAMPIONS (7)**
2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008
- LIGUE 2 CHAMPIONS (3)**
1951, 1954, 1989
- FRENCH CUP WINNERS (5)**
1964, 1967, 1973, 2008, 2012
- FRENCH LEAGUE CUP WINNERS (1)**
2001
- SUPER CUP WINNERS (8)**
1973, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2012



(* as of 19.02.15)



Leading by example...skipper Gonalons

► must have been against the nature of this born fighter and habitual winner, the president opted to back down and simply decided not to compete.

Big-money signings were out of the question, an escalating player wage bill had to be cut and Lyon would now be depending on the output of their own academy to develop the first team of the future. Until such time, the tacit admission was that Lyon would have to play second fiddle to Paris – and maybe a few other French teams to boot.

Lyon supporters may well have had the right to be peeved; after all, you pay your money to see your team winning trophies, and all the talk of prudent financial housekeeping doesn't hold much interest for those in the stands. But Aulas is nothing if not strong willed and he would not be swayed from his path.

And perhaps, after all, he knew something nobody else did.

Under coach Remi Garde, Lyon finished in fourth, third and fifth place in three seasons from 2012 to 2014, despite the financial austerity which saw their wage bill cut by some 40 per cent. Not a bad performance by any means, and of course

Striking power...Lacazette is eclipsing even Ibrahimovic's goalscoring feats this season



Lacazette looks to have all the attributes to become a real star

this went some way to appeasing any sense of supporter discontent. But what was genuinely exciting was the spectacular success of the club's home-grown youth policy. At just 25, defensive midfielder Maxime Gonalons has played over 200 times for Lyon and is established as club captain. Like Gonalons, midfielder partner Clement Grenier is also a fully-fledged France international. Full-back Samuel Umtiti, winger Nabil Fekir and midfielder Jordan Ferri, meanwhile, have all been hugely impressive when stepping up to the first team and all look to have exciting

careers ahead of them.

Aulas will be bursting with pride that his academy, whose most famous alumni is Benzema, has been consistently turning out all these talented youngsters at a fraction of the cost of big-name purchases. But there's no doubt who is the jewel in the crown right now.

Alexandre Lacazette is still just 23, but the striker has already notched up over 175 first-team appearances in a Lyon shirt and has a strike rate of more than a goal every three games. By the start of February he was streets ahead in the Ligue 1 goalscoring charts, leading no less a talent than PSG's Zlatan Ibrahimovic by more than two goals to one.

A local boy, Lacazette has been part of ►



JEAN-MICHEL AULAS

President and businessman who indulged his passion for football by taking over Lyon in 1987. Oversaw the most successful period in the club's history, but still wrestles with debt as he moves them into a new era.



BERNARD LACOMBE

"Advisor to the president", charged with overseeing player-recruitment strategy. Former Lyon striker and Ligue 1's all-time greatest French forward with 255 goals.



STEPHANE ROCHE

The 44-year-old former Lyon midfielder has been in charge of the club's highly rated academy since June 2011, having joined the coaching team from Caen the previous year.



PATRICK ILIOU

Charged with making the €405million new stadium project a reality, the former auditor has been a close business associate of Aulas for almost 10 years.



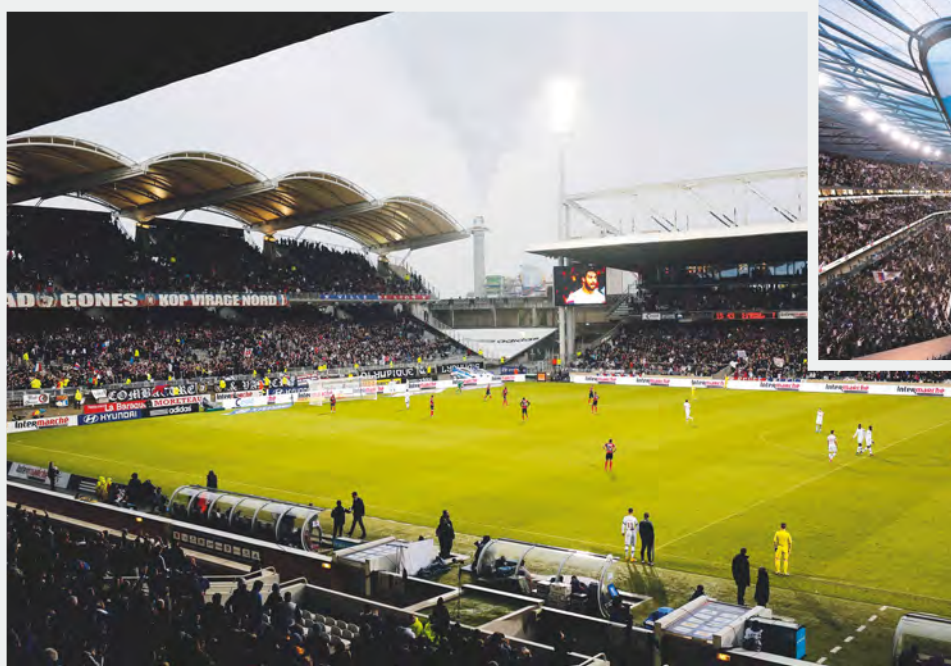
THIERRY SAUVAGE

General manager for business and finance. Pinning hopes on the new stadium and resurgent team to change the club's monetary fortunes.

THE POWER CURVE

The key figures behind Lyon

THE STADIUM



Futuristic...artist's impression of the new Stade des Lumières

Spacious...the new stadium will be in Lyon's suburbs



Lyon have played at Stade de Gerland, since their inception. The stadium itself was built in 1926 and features distinctive cantilevered stands at each end.

The stadium was used for matches at the 1984 European Championship and 1998 World Cup, having undergone rebuilding work ahead of both tournaments. As well as hosting rock concerts, Stade Gerland was also a host

Old stadium...
Lyon's Stade Gerland

Taking shape...
new stadium under construction



venue for the 2003 Confederations Cup, including the match between Cameroon and Colombia, when midfielder Marc-Vivien Foe collapsed and died.

All-seater requirements have reduced Gerland's capacity to around 43,000 and prompted club president Jean-Michel Aulas to leave the ageing Gerland and pursue ambitious plans for a new stadium on land in Decines-Charpieu, 10km to the east, in the city's suburbs.

The plans will come to fruition later this year when Stade des Lumières opens ahead of the 2016 European

Championship. Construction of the 58,000-capacity arena has been dogged by political infighting, not least protests from local people angry at the environmental impact, as well as costs which have been borne by the public purse. Government funds have paid for around half of the total €400million costs, with the remainder paid for by Lyon and private investors.

Although the site in Decines-Charpieu was chosen in 2007, construction work only began in 2012.

The new arena has been designed by Populous, the architects who worked on the new Wembley and Arsenal's Emirates stadium. It will be an archtypal modern, three-tiered bowl but with the

addition of a spectacular transparent roof which will be illuminated at night.

Lyon's training ground will relocate to land alongside the new stadium as well as separate commercial developments that will help to increase Lyon's revenue-earning potential. The 50-hectare site will host a leisure centre, two hotels and office building as part of the private investment that has paid for the stadium's construction.

After Stade de France (81,000) in Paris and Marseille's Stade Velodrome (67,500), Lyon's new stadium will be third biggest arena in France.

It will host four group matches at Euro 2016, as well as one of the semi-finals.





Last line of defence
...keeper Lopes foils Nice

► Lyon's academy since 2006 and has always been earmarked as one to watch. He signed his first professional contract in June 2010 and had hit the back of the net as a first-team player by October of that year. His obvious potential meant the club could trim their wage bill by allowing the Argentinian striker Lisandro Lopez to leave in 2013 and France international Bafetimbi Gomis to follow in 2014.

Lacazette's performances since becoming top dog haven't disappointed and he looks to have all the attributes to become a real star. He's big and strong, which means he can really lead the line alone, and he scores spectacular goals, often picking the ball up outside the area and driving past defenders before unleashing an absolute hammer of a right foot. But he also has both the deftness of touch to work spaces and the awareness to notch up assists. No wonder Europe's major teams are all sniffing around.

With his usual chutzpah, Aulas has

"We really want to be back in the Champions League"

Lyon president, Jean-Michel Aulas

warned everyone off, saying it would take a world record fee of more than €100m to prise Lacazette away. That is stretching it a bit, but it will be music to the ears of current Lyon coach Hubert Fournier.

The former Reims boss arrived at Lyon at the start of this campaign to replace Garde, who opted not to continue in the role at the end of last season. While Fournier already had a burgeoning reputation in footballing circles, having led Reims back to the top flight for the first time in 33 years in 2012, it's fair to say that his leadership this term has surprised almost everyone.

While many pundits and supporters alike expected a PSG procession towards another Ligue 1 title, Fournier has driven

Lyon to the top of the table on the back of the league's most prolific attack and a watertight defence that leaked just 19 goals in the first 25 games of the campaign. While there's still a long way to go, of course, there are those who dare to dream of the return of Lyon's glory days.

"We really want to be back in the Champions League," says Aulas. "And to do that we need to think about what Hubert needs to get us there, rather than think about what we might have to take away from him."

Holding on to the impressive array of young talent currently at Lyon's disposal won't be easy, though. Not when the club



Euro peak...Lyon's Champions League semi-final clash with Bayern Munich in 2010

announced an annual loss of €26.4m for last season. The inauguration of the new stadium clearly can't come quickly enough and Lyon hope to be performing in the Stade Des Lumieres by the end of the year.

Aulas knows he still has some way to go before he can honestly hope to see his beloved Lyon trying to muscle their way in at European football's top table. But with a team of exciting young talent and the prospect of a cash cow in the form of a new stadium just around the corner, there's every chance that Olympique Lyonnais will be giving those cash-rich Parisians a real run for their money before too long. **WS**

THE COACH



HUBERT FOURNIER

Age 47 (03.09.67)

A journeyman defender during a playing career that spanned 16 years and six clubs, he wore the Lyon shirt between 1998 and 2000. Having hung up his boots in 2004, he began his coaching career as an assistant at Boulogne before striking out on his own at Gueugnon. Having joined Ligue 2 club Reims as assistant to Marc Collet, he eventually took over for the start of the 2010-11 campaign. By the end of the following season he had led Reims back to the top flight, and after two solid seasons was headhunted by Lyon for the start of this campaign.

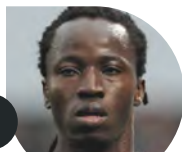
THE KIT



HOME KIT

SECOND KIT

THE SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS	 30 Mathieu GORGELIN Age 24 (05.08.90) Joined the Lyon academy in 2002 and made his debut in 2013. Signed a three-year contract extension in 2014.	 1 Anthony LOPES (Por) Age 24 (01.10.90) French-born but chose to represent Portugal, the country of his family. Made his debut in 2012 and was first choice by 2014.	DEFENDERS	 3 Henri BEDIMO (Cam) Age 30 (04.06.84) Left-back who left his native country in 1999 to start a career in France. Joined Lyon from Montpellier, where he won Ligue 1, in 2013.	 5 Milan BISEVAC (Ser) Age 31 (31.08.83) Centre-half signed in 2012 from PSG. Ruptured knee ligaments against Monaco in February and is out for the rest of the season.	 14 Mouhamadou DABO Age 28 (28.11.86) Senegal-born defender who can play on either flank. Left Saint-Etienne for Sevilla before returning to sign a four-year deal with Lyon in August 2011.	
	 13 Christophe JALLET Age 31 (31.10.83) Rampaging right-back and France international who made nearly 200 appearances for Paris Saint-Germain before switching to Lyon last July.	 4 Bakary KONE (BuF) Age 26 (27.04.88) Born in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, he joined Guingamp at the age of 18. Moved to Lyon in 2011 and has since made over 100 appearances.		 22 Lindsay ROSE Age 23 (08.02.92) French under-21 defender who arrived from Valenciennes in July 2014. His agent is Daphnee Bravard, one of a handful of female agents in France.	 23 Samuel UMTITI Age 21 (14.11.93) Centre-half who was born in Cameroon. He came through the academy and won the Under-20 World Cup with France in 2013.	MIDFIELDERS	 29 Fares BAHLOULI Age 19 (08.04.95) Local lad who made his debut at 17 in 2012 and has gained more game time from the bench this season.
	 18 Nabil FEKIR Age 21 (18.07.93) Released at 15, but re-signed after impressing against Lyon at under-18 level. France under-21 cap but Algeria are keen to pick him at senior level.	 12 Jordan FERRI Age 22 (12.03.92) France under-21 international who made his Lyon debut in November 2012 and has already played over 75 games for the club.		 - Gueida FOFANA Age 23 (16.05.91) Arrived from Le Havre on a four-year deal in the summer of 2011 and has since played more than 100 times in his favoured position on the right.	 11 Rachid GHEZZAL (Alg) Age 22 (09.05.92) Born in the Lyon area but opted to represent Algeria, despite already making four appearances for France's under-20 side.		 21 Maxime GONALONS Age 25 (10.03.89) Club captain and France international who made his Lyon debut in 2009. Has less than 18 months left on his contract.
	 8 Yoann GOURCUFF Age 28 (11.07.86) Talented international who has never quite fulfilled the potential he showed as a youngster with Milan. Has had his share of injury problems.	 7 Clement GRENIER Age 24 (07.01.91) Attacking midfielder who was named in France's 2014 World Cup squad but had to pull out through injury.		 17 Steed MALBRANQUE Age 35 (06.01.80) Back at the club where he started. Had spells in England and then Saint-Etienne, where he played just 26 minutes. Rejoined Lyon in 2012.	 28 Arnold MVUMBA Age 30 (28.01.85) French-born with Congolese roots, he started with Rennes, before spells with Portsmouth in England and Lorient back in France. Joined Lyon in 2012.		 24 Corentin TOLISSO Age 20 (03.08.94) Another academy product and with the club for 10 years. Can play either in midfield or at right-back and has made over 50 first-team appearances.
 25 Yassine BENZIA Age 20 (08.09.94) Made his name with France at the Under-17 World Cup in 2011. Was on the radar of Liverpool, Milan and Juventus, but chose Lyon.	 27 Maxwel CORNET Age 18 (27.09.96) Ivorian-born France under-19 signed in January from Metz, where he won the Ligue 2 title last term. Scored on his Lyon league debut – against Metz.	 10 Alexandre LACAZETTE Age 23 (28.05.91) One of the hottest properties around. Strong, athletic and blessed with a fearsome shot. In fine goalscoring form this season.	 20 Clinton N'JIE (Cam) Age 21 (15.08.93) English-speaking Cameroonian international who needs to improve his goalscoring record if he is to establish himself in the Lyon side.	 19 Mohamed YATTARA (Gui) Age 21 (28.07.93) Born in Guinea and joined Lyon's academy in 2009. Loaned to Arles-Avignon, Troyes and Angers, but now looking to establish himself.			
FORWARDS							

(All ages as of 27.02.15)

Talentscout

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

[SOUTH AMERICAN UNDER-20S]

WORDS: TIM VICKERY



3 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT CORREA

- He almost joined Benfica for free in 2012 but the deal collapsed.
- He shares an agent with Eduardo Salvio and says that the Argentinian winger used to send him Atletico Madrid shirts when he played there.
- He was the 2015 South American Youth Championship's joint-third top scorer with four goals.

Angel CORREA

**Forward, 19 (09.03.95),
Atletico Madrid (Spa) & Argentina**

In a sentence

The 2015 South American Youth Championship was a triumphant return for a support striker with the vision and passing range of a playmaker, the dribbling skills of a winger and the penalty-area smarts of a centre-forward.

What they say

Argentina under-20s coach, Humberto Grondona: "Correa was a miracle. Seven months ago I was at a tournament in Spain and he dropped by. At that time the idea that he could play in [the South American Youth Championship] was unthinkable. He has no limits." Diego Simeone, Atletico Madrid coach: "We're very happy with what

"He's shown a lot of personality and we know that, as a player, he has many attributes"

Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone

he has done with Argentina, after so much effort from him and his family to overcome a difficult situation. He's shown a lot of personality and we know that, as a player, he has many attributes."

The story so far

Came up through the youth ranks at San Lorenzo, where he was talked about as a future Carlos Tevez or Sergio Aguero. He demonstrated in last year's Libertadores Cup that the comparison was not exact, and that he's at his best operating a little deeper, but talent is all there. Atletico Madrid came in with an offer – only for a medical to reveal a career-threatening

heart condition. He had an operation, and after eight months out was thrown back in action in Uruguay.

The next step

A little unclear. There was speculation that Atletico might loan him to Rayo Vallecano for the rest of the season, but this is now looking less likely. The youth tournament was very intensive, with nine games in under a month, and with the Under-20 World Cup coming up in June, Atletico are anxious not to place too many demands on him so soon after his comeback.

Strengths

Can launch quick, slalom dribbles; good vision and execution of passes; scores goals; has a range of options sufficiently broad to trouble defences.

Weaknesses

His left foot still needs some work.

Triumph...with the South American Youth Championship trophy



Pedro AQUINO

Midfielder,
19 (13.04.95),
Sporting Cristal
& Peru

Spiky central midfielder who picked up first-team experience last year with the Peruvian champions. Tackles hard – if a little rashly at times – is mobile and not scared to look for the probing pass. Could grow into an important player in a senior national side that has lacked mental strength.



Sergio DIAZ

Forward, 16 (05.03.98), Cerro Porteno & Paraguay

The youngest player in the tournament, he had a fine introduction to senior football with his club last year. In Uruguay, though, the little support striker showed he is still lacking in physical and emotional maturity. The talent, however, is undeniable and is a calm finisher.



Juan Sebastian QUINTERO

Defender,
19 (23.03.95),
Deportivo Cali
& Colombia

Leading candidate for centre-back of the tournament. Team captain who was calm, unfussy and a combative organiser of the defensive line. Well-educated figure from a middle-class background who reads the game well but can struggle for pace.



Gaston GURUCEAGA

Goalkeeper, 19 (15.03.95), Penarol & Uruguay

Looks to be the best young keeper Uruguay have had for years. Made athletic saves at important moments, kept his concentration and dealt well with the pressure of playing at home. A good Under-20 World Cup in June could see him fast tracked into the senior squad.



Jeison Steven LUCUMI

Midfielder, 19 (08.04.95), America & Colombia

His team's most effective attacking weapon and at his best when using his long-striding pace and dribbling skills to run at the defence from wide positions. Will not stay in the Colombian second division for much longer.



Alvaro MONTERO

Goalkeeper, 19 (29.03.95), Sao Caetano (Bra) & Colombia

The best of an excellent crop of keepers in the tournament. Giant figure with sharp reflexes who was beaten just three times in the eight matches he played. Never a professional at home, he now plays for a team in the Brazilian fourth division.



Gaston PEREIRO

Midfielder,
19 (11.06.95),
Nacional & Uruguay

Already established with the reigning Uruguayan champs, the lanky left-footed playmaker lived up to his billing in the tournament, although the team's direct style frequently bypassed midfield. Was the second-top scorer with five goals: two headers, a tap-in and two cool finishes after skilfully making space. Versatile and highly talented.



Giovanni SIMEONE

Forward, 19 (05.07.95), River Plate & Argentina

The son of the Atletico Madrid coach, Diego Simeone, was top scorer in the South American Youth Championship with nine goals, drilled in efficiently off either foot. Real deal or rabbit killer? Correa and company set up plenty of chances, and he failed to score against the strongest sides.



GERSON

Midfielder,
17 (20.07.97),
Fluminense
& Brazil

The brightest light in a disappointing side. Strong and talented left-footer who played some splendid defence-splitting passes and was compared by some observers to Paul Pogba. Had an uneven tournament, which is understandable given his age. Has yet to play for his club side.



Profile: JOACHIM LOW



 WORDS: NICK BIDWELL

A TRIUMPH FOR SWISS TIMING

Germany's World Cup-winning coach, renowned for his tactical flexibility and dedication to detail, has enjoyed an unconventional route to the top



German football fans who snootily regard their Swiss neighbours as round-ball poor relations might have to think again in the light of the Alpine confederation's major influence on the *Nationalmannschaft's* World Cup consecration in Brazil.

Urs Siegenthaler, the German federation's brilliant opposition analyst, is a pure-bred Helvetian, while recently sanctified *Bundestrainer* Joachim "Jogi" Low owes much of his football philosophy to his time in the employ of Swiss clubs.

A forward or attacking midfielder in the late 1980s and early 90s with Schaffhausen and Winterthur, then coach of Frauenfeld, Low spent no fewer than six highly instructional years working in Switzerland – and it is a period which very much shaped the principles and *modus operandi* of the world champion to be.

Low was 29 when he first left Germany for Switzerland in 1989, swapping a place on the first-team fringes at Freiburg for a more embedded role at second division Schaffhausen. His best days as a player were arguably behind him, but always one to seek out the positives, he was determined to make the move a rewarding exercise, and this he duly did.

Lauded for his intelligent play in the final third of the pitch, he was praised for his professionalism and, crucially, he tuned into the words of wisdom of coach Rolf



Early days...playing for Karlsruhe

Fringer, who would become his mentor.

An Austrian-born Swiss national who was just three years Low's senior, Fringer quickly identified the German as a kindred spirit, a fellow football obsessive. Within no time at all the pair had formed an out-of-hours brains trust.

"We used to discuss football an awful lot, and what really fascinated 'Jogi' was tactics," recalls Fringer. "I'd like to think I opened his eyes to the modern game."

"He'd been brought up in the old German school. He only knew the 3-5-2 system, with a classic libero and two defensive markers who would follow their strikers to the toilet."

"Using such a formation, Germany had won everything and they weren't particularly open to new trends."

"Switzerland, as a small football nation, took on board much of what was happening abroad, in England, Italy, France and Germany. For Jogi, it was all new."

"Pressing, a four-man back line, zonal



FACT FILE

JOACHIM LOW

AGE

55 (03.02.60)

PLACE OF BIRTH

Schonau, Germany

PLAYING CAREER

Freiburg

(1978-80)

74 games/18 goals

Stuttgart

(1980-81)

4 games/0 goals

Eintracht Frankfurt

(1981-82)

29 games/5 goals

Freiburg

(1982-84)

68 games/26 goals

Karlsruhe

(1984-85)

26 games/2 goals

Freiburg

(1985-89)

120 games/39 goals

Schaffhausen

(1989-92)

105 games/25 goals

Winterthur

(1992-94)

64 games/15 goals

Frauenfeld

(1994-95)

30 games/2 goals

West Germany U21

(1979-80)

4 games/0 goals

COACHING CAREER

Frauenfeld

(1994-95)

Stuttgart

(1996-98)

Fenerbahce

(1998-99)

Karlsruhe

(1999-2000)

Adanaspor

(2001)

Tirol Innsbruck

(2001-02)

Austria Vienna

(2003-04)

Germany assistant

coach

(2004-06)

Germany

(2006-present)

HONOURS

Stuttgart

German Cup 1997

Tirol Innsbruck

Austrian Bundesliga

2002

Austria Vienna

Austrian Super

Cup 2003

Germany

World Cup 2014

defence, neat build-up from the back and so on. He straight away absorbed this new and totally different culture. He immediately realised the importance of tactical flexibility."

In a successful coaching career, Fringer would win the Swiss league title with Aarau and Grasshoppers, and also take charge of Bundesliga side Stuttgart and Switzerland's national team. But never was he more historically significant than when inspiring Low to follow in his footsteps. When Fringer was appointed Stuttgart boss in the summer of 1995, he put Low on the payroll as his assistant.

Some 25 years ago, Switzerland was fertile ground for a would-be coach to learn his craft. With bosses of many different nationalities in the top two divisions, the resulting rainbow of styles and tactical approaches would have been manna from heaven for the ever-curious Low. And wherever he looked he would have found enticing philosophies: the



Honours...2002 Austrian league winner with Tirol

sophisticated tactical approach of Ottmar Hitzfeld at Grasshoppers, Gilbert Gress' power football with Neuchatel Xamax and Servette, the technically assured possession game of the Argentinian Enzo Trossero at Sion, Fringer's progressive template for Schaffhausen and the finely tuned organisation preached by Roy Hodgson at Neuchatel.

Low also had a wonderful teacher in Wolfgang Frank, the German who was his coach for the 1992-93 season at second division Winterthur. A thoroughly modern football thinker – and widely considered the father of the intense pressing game made popular by Borussia Dortmund boss Jurgen Klopp – Frank loved nothing more than going against mechanistic Teutonic type. Although he and Low had their fall-outs, his non-conformity struck a distinct chord.

"Jogi the player was no model athlete," remembers Pascal Humbel, a team-mate at Winterthur. "However, he made up for it with technical ability and a great deal of



His greatest triumph...Low salutes the fans after Germany become world champions at Brazil 2014



Winner...Gotze celebrates scoring against Argentina

intelligence and awareness. He was our leader on the pitch and let us know it."

Axel Thoma, who not only played alongside Low as a striker for Stuttgart, Schaffhausen and Winterthur but also set up a tie-selling business with him in Schaffhausen, says: "The main thing about Jogi is he played with the mind of a coach. He was superb at reading the game."

"When we were at Schaffhausen, Jogi, Rolf Fringer and I were always discussing and analysing football. He's a very sociable and communicative person too. He thought it completely normal to help new players settle into the club."

While starring for Winterthur, Low began coaching the youth team and not surprisingly, the role of educator cum selector fitted him like a glove.

"On and off the pitch, he demanded a lot from the young guys and constantly challenged them," says former Winterthur

"I said to Gotze: 'OK, show the world you are better than Messi and can decide the World Cup'"

Low's instructions to sub Mario Gotze before he scored the winning goal in the World Cup Final

midfielder Carlos Bernegger. "He was good at encouraging and making others brave."

"I remember how he reacted after I tore cruciate ligaments. He came to visit me every day in hospital."

"Even then it was clear he had something more than the others."

In the summer of 1994, Low moved to the capital of the Thurgau canton in north-east Switzerland to become player-coach of third division Frauenfeld and wasted no time at all in producing a winning team. Low was now lining up as an adventurous centre-back and his side

invariably impressed with their attacking style, enterprise and compact shape. Once a game was over, he would always go over to the Frauenfeld fans and thank them for their support.

"Besides being one of the most tactically aware coaches I've ever seen, he wanted his players to share his enjoyment of the game," says Frauenfeld striker Giorgio Contini, whose career was so rejuvenated by Low that he went on to win the Swiss championship with St Gallen and gain full international honours. "The aim was for us players to come to the training ground and escape from all our everyday worries at home or at work."

"He had great charisma without ever appearing pretentious or arrogant. He was not the typical authoritarian Mr Head Coach. That's why he's especially effective with young players."

For all of his natural attributes as a coach, Low could not have risen to the top without a helping hand from fate. If his path had not been cleared by Fringer – first taking him to Stuttgart, then quitting within a year to take over Switzerland – all might have turned out very differently. And a similar turning point took place in 2000 when he first met Jurgen Klinsmann at a DFB coaching course at the Hennef Sports School, south of Cologne.

The pair shared an affinity for fluid, attacking football and almost instantaneously formed a mutual



Stuttgart days...with Krasimir Balakov (right)

appreciation society. Following his appointment four years later as *Bundestrainer*, Klinsmann swiftly drafted in Low as his right-hand man, explaining to the media how impressed he had been by his nuts-and-bolts insight during those lecture-theatre sessions.

"I was a professional for 18 years and in that time no coach ever explained how a back four should shift across the pitch," declared Klinsmann. "With Jogi, I understood in a minute."

Quite content to allow Klinsmann to take centre stage as the project manager and motivational speaker, Low enjoyed



In charge...Löw gets his message across to the Germany squad before a friendly against Spain in Vigo last year

more or less total autonomy in the tactical department. Peerless in his ability to get his message across and meticulously drill his players, he very much laid the foundations for Germany's third-place finish at the 2006 World Cup. No sooner had the tournament ended than Klinsmann said farewell. Anxious to build on the exuberant momentum of that summer, Löw was sensibly promoted from within.

"Jogi Löw has, in the last 10 years cultivated and revolutionised German football," wrote Fringer in Swiss newspaper *Blick* on the eve of the Brazil 2014 World

Champion...lifting the World Cup in Brazil



"We started this project 10 years ago and what has happened today is the result of many years' work"

Löw on becoming world champions

Cup Final. "In the past, there might have been a Hassler or a Littbarski in the German national team, but predominantly it was the man-markers union. Today, however, they have lots of creative players and Löw has turned them into a unit.

"Outside of Germany, the team used to have the image of the public enemy.

"That has gone. Now the Germans are admired for winning with constructive football and for a coach, there can't be a bigger compliment"

Klinsmann certainly chose correctly when making Löw his assistant. At the Hennef School, Löw is regarded as one

of the best students to pass through the institution, and the fact that his specialist subject "Improvements in Passing When in Difficulty" received top marks says it all about the man's theoretical grasp.

"It was fun to work with Joachim at that time," says his former tutor Gero Brisanz. "He was calm and relaxed, and I cannot remember him ever becoming negative in any situation.

"Normally that course was reserved for national team players with at least 40 caps, but he was given special dispensation on the grounds that he'd begun a similar line of study in Switzerland and hadn't been able to finish it. It's a good thing we gave him a chance. He could coach any team in the world"

Throughout his reign as Germany's

national coach there have been many periods spent in the eye of the storm – notably the contract-extension row which pitted him against DFB president Theo Zwanziger in 2010 and the mauling he received from the media in the wake of his side's limp 2-1 loss to Italy in the semi-finals of Euro 2012. But somehow he has always managed to roll with the punches.

There is much more grit and fortitude about him than meets the eye, and because of the many setbacks in his early days as a coach he has developed a stoical protective shield.

Despite his excellent work at the Stuttgart helm – where he achieved fourth-place finishes in both of his seasons in charge, won the German Cup in 1997

Down days... Germany lose to Italy in the semi-final of Euro 2012



Joachim Low's CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

OLIVER BIERHOFF
The former German striker won 70 caps and scored the national side's winner at Euro 96. The national side's general manager since July 2004 and the public face of the organisation. Urbane, eloquent, he has been on the DFB board for the last eight years.

HANS-DIETER FLICK
The ex-Bayern Munich and Cologne midfielder was Low's trusty second-in-command for eight years before last summer. One of his national team duties was dead-ball situations and more emphasis at Brazil 2014.

HANS-DIETER HERMANN
Sports psychologist first brought into the national team set-up by Klinsmann in late 2004. Hoffenheim's "mental coach" from 2006 to 2010, he is very close to the players and is famous for kicking off the post-match celebrations after victory in the third-place play-off at the 2006 World Cup.

YANN-BENJAMIN KUGEL
Innovative fitness coach whose first tour of duty was at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. Once head of squad conditioning at Werder Bremen, he combines national team work with similar responsibilities at Cologne.

HANS-WILHELM MÜLLER-WOLFFFAHRT
Globally renowned sports-injury specialist who has been the *Nationalmannschaft* doctor since 1995 and has headed Bayern Munich's medical department for the past 38 years. Unconventional but extremely popular with elite performers.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER
Replaced Flick as Low's assistant at the start of this season. Something of a surprise choice given his short, unsuccessful spell in charge of Stuttgart last season.

URS SIEGENTHALER
Ultra-meticulous chief scout who has no equal at locating weak spots in the opposition and keeping the Bundestrainer abreast of current trends in international football. The 65-year-old Swiss seldom finds his way into the public eye – and that's exactly the way he likes it.

ROLF FRINGER
The former Aarau, Grasshoppers and Switzerland coach is widely regarded as Low's chief mentor on to all things tactical and he encouraged him to take his coaching qualifications. After Fringer's appointment as Stuttgart coach in 1995, his first move was to bring in Low as his assistant.

WERNER OLK
Once the captain of Beckenbauer, Müller, he was Low's coach at Freiburg and offered the youngster a crash course in leadership and professionalism.

WOLFGANG FRANK
Very much a German coaching intellectual, he regularly picked Low to play up front while in charge of Swiss club Winterthur in the early 1990s. Their association lasted just one season but the former's love of innovation – his flat back-four and pressing tactics running counter to the Teutonic manual at the time – left an indelible mark on the future World Cup winner.

JÜRGEN KLINSMANN
Without Klinsmann's backing, Low's 10-year reign at the DFB would never have got off the ground. Initially taken with Low's tactical expertise and skills at communication that, on becoming *Bundestrainer* in July 2004, he promptly brought him on board as his number two – a decision that has proved to be one of the most astute in the history of German football.

and took them to the final of the 1998 European Cup-winners Cup, where they lost 1-0 to Chelsea – the irony was that Low always seemed to be treading on thin ice. According to the rumour mill, club president Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder found him too much of a nice guy to lead effectively and it was no shock when he was replaced in 1998 by the far more macho Winfried Schäfer.

Apart from leading Tirol Innsbruck to the Austrian league title, it is fair to say that Low's lot as a club boss generally left a lot to be desired. Short spells in Turkey with Fenerbahçe and Adanaspor earned him little in the way of kudos. In 2000 a dreadful run of just one win in 18 led to the inevitable sack at German second-tier side Karlsruhe and he lasted a mere eight months at Austria Vienna, incredibly fired with the team top of the table.

Thanks to his outstanding results over a long period as *Bundestrainer*, it is often forgotten how good Low was in his playing kit. A native of Schonau in the Black Forest region of south-west Germany, he might not have been the quickest or most physically imposing of attacking-third operators, but he still had enough flair and ability to win four caps for Germany's under-21s in 1979 and 1980, taking time



Kindred spirits...as Klinsmann's assistant at the Confederations Cup in 2005



Turkish delight...coach of Fenerbahçe

off from his day-to-day duties with Freiburg to line up for his country alongside such exceptional individuals as Rudi Völler, Lothar Matthäus, Pierre Littbarski and Bernd Schuster.

What a shame, though, that he would prove unable to fulfil his undoubted potential. While invariably looking the part in the second division with Freiburg, where he was the club's best-ever marksman in

three spells, every time Low tried his luck in the Bundesliga – at Stuttgart, Eintracht Frankfurt and Karlsruhe – he never quite made the breakthrough.

Come his dotage, he will just have to make do with his *Bundestrainer* feats: his radical national-team makeover, their consistency at the highest level and last year's world championship.

Not bad to be going on with. **WS**



March 1983

The UEFA Super Cup showdown, plus Holland's new generation

The team groups of 1982 European Cup victors Aston Villa and Cup-winners Cup holders Barcelona adorned the front cover of *World Soccer*, accompanied by the headline: "Battle For The Super Cup".

And the word "battle" was something of an understatement, as three players were sent off before Villa triumphed 3-1 on aggregate in extra time.

Charles Burgess wrote: "The referee was Alex Ponnet of Belgium, a respected FIFA official. His report minced no words. He had never refereed a game like it. Some of the Spanish tackling could have brought blood."

He went on to comment that "Barcelona defended with increasing savagery" and "the football became no better in extra time and the violence grew worse".

Elsewhere in this issue, Holland's national team was very much in the spotlight, with coach Kees Rijvers debating whether or not to play with a libero/sweeper.

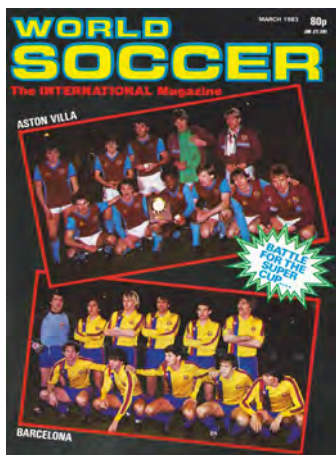
After a friendly against England, veteran defender Ruud Krol was dropped by Rijvers, only to then be recalled for the game against Spain.

Cian O'Mahoney wrote: "Rijvers placed Krol [for the England game] in front of his central defence and behind the midfield. Krol didn't play well because he needs room to be able to operate and oversee the situation. He is a salmon, not a sardine."

O'Mahoney added that Rijvers "may have declared the era of the libero to be over and done with, but in the four games played since Krol was discarded he has used five players - Van der Korput, Metgod, Stevens, Spelbos and Hovenkamp - who have performed as orthodox liberos. A la Krol. But not as good as Krol."

In the same editorial feature, O'Mahoney previewed "Holland's Young Generation",

The future's Oranje... the tactical problems facing Holland and the country's up-and-coming young stars



Cup clash...three see red as Villa beat Barca



who would be lining up alongside Krol for his swansong against Spain and forming the nucleus of the next Dutch era.

Five years before they would go on to

TO SWEEP OR NOT TO SWEEP?

BARRING injury Rudi Krol will make his return to international football on February 16 for the European Championship match between Spain and Holland. And thereby hangs a tale.

Krol made his debut for Holland against England in 1969. Coincidentally, it was also against England (in 1977) that he made his debut as national sweeper. This was the position in which he set new standards of excellence and won worldwide renown. With an architect's eye for symmetry, national coach Kees Rijvers decided that last May's game against England would be Krol's final international appearance.

Rijvers wanted to build a new team of young players and at 33 Krol did not fit into his plans. But there was a more important reason why he wanted to abandon Krol. He had profound doubts about the function Krol fulfils in a team and its relevance to modern soccer. In Rijvers' view, the libero/sweeper role had become "old-fashioned and out-of-date".

Britain has always been considered as a tactical backwater by the Dutch. So it was unusual when Rijvers pointed to England as a place from which Holland could learn. "In England they have the daring to play man-to-man marking at the back without any covering player. That is the system I intend to introduce here."

It was ironic that while Rijvers was praising British methods for the modernism, Ron Greenwood and Jock Stein were for the first time experimenting with liberos (Wilkins and Soones) in their national teams. The introduction of what was regarded as a sophisticated continental technique in Britain was widely praised by the foremost British journalists. It was all very confusing. Who was modern and who was out-of-date?

One of the things Rijvers disliked about the classic libero was the element of privilege which he felt intrinsic in it. By definition a "libero" is "free". That freedom is only made possible by other players having strictly restricted tasks. He told me "when people talk about Beckenbauer, I always think of Schwarzenbeck. Beckenbauer couldn't possibly have built such a successful career if Schwarzenbeck hadn't mopped up such an amount of dirty work for him over the years."

The implication was that Beckenbauer did the glamorous work that got noticed, Schwarzenbeck did the unglamorous work which was just as important. But it was Beckenbauer who carried off all the praise. An unfair world.

Nor was Rijvers prepared to sit back and admire Krol basking in his reputation. From the start he criticised him for being too defensive and not getting into the opposition half often enough. And though he didn't mention Krol by name, he accused the old school of liberos for hiding behind their defence, playing unnecessarily cautiously and disguising their weaknesses by refusing to commit themselves in attack.

What Rijvers really wanted was a flexibility of roles in defence. He wanted to abandon the stereo-typed central defensive partnership of strong-arm thug - good in the air/tough on the ground - and the aristocratic sweeper, strutting about as if he had better things to do than getting "stuck in" like the plebs. There should be

no distinction between the two central defenders. Both should be able to come forward. Both should be able to do a specific marking job. As the situation demanded.

In the late spring of 1981 Rijvers travelled to Stuttgart to watch Brazil beat West Germany. The Brazilians made a deep impression on him. Brazil played without a libero and in Oscar and Luisinho Rijvers thought he detected his Marxist vision of new central defence where labours and freedoms were distributed equitably and organised flexibility was the watchword.

Rijvers decided that Krol would have to move with the times and change his style. Otherwise he would be out. For the World Cup against the Republic of Ireland he lined up without full-backs, instructing Krol to patrol both areas. How can a player be reasonably asked to be in two places at the same time? It was no coincidence that both Irish goals were set up from the empty Dutch full-back position. A home point was dropped and Krol had to carry the can.

For the game against England Rijvers continued his experiments, placing Krol in front of his central defence Metgod/van der Korput and behind the midfield. Krol didn't play well because he needs room to be able to operate and oversee the situation. He is a salmon, not a sardine.

Rijvers professed himself "dis-

appointed" with his captain. And later, in Spain, he announced that Krol would not play for Holland again. There were better, more modern things in Rijvers' mind. Holland didn't need their record international any more.

Two things happened since then.

1. The revolution in defensive tactics which Rijvers had expected during the last World Cup did not take place. More than that, Oscar and Luisinho rarely ventured out of their own half, no more than Terry Butcher and Phil Thompson did. Nothing very "modern" about that! Of course there were sound tactical reasons why they didn't. Someone had to cover the extremely offensive full-backs Junior and Lenardo.

Still a glorious player like Luisinho had to hide his attacking light under the bushel of Santana's tactics. Brazil were flexible, but there flexibility didn't go as far as Rijvers had envisaged.

2. This past autumn showed that though there may be better things on Rijvers' mind, they are not being expressed by his players out on the pitch. He may have declared the era of the libero to be over and done with, but in the four games played since Krol was discarded Rijvers has used five players - van der Korput, Metgod, Stevens, Spelbos and Hovenkamp - who have performed as orthodox liberos. A la Krol. But not as good as Krol.



Holland's captain Rudi Krol is watched by England's Paul Mariner.

win the 1988 European Championship in Germany, O'Mahoney had this to say about some of Holland's future stars:

● Marco Van Basten (18 years old): "If he fulfils his potential could indeed be the biggest thing to happen to Dutch football since Johan Cruyff"

● Ruud Gullit (20): "Very gifted. His nonchalant style belies his ability to suddenly accelerate"

● Erwin Koeman (21): "Left-footed player with a refined style and a cracking shot"

● Ronald Koeman (19): "Plays with a steady concentration unusual for one of his years. Good technique"

● Frank Rijkaard (20): "Beautiful laconic ball control, full of silken touches. Possible Dutch libero of the future"

● Gerald Vanenburg (18): "A little wizard with the ball. Holland's answer to [Oswaldo] Ardiles and [Alain] Giresse." **WS**

WORLD SOCCER, MARCH 1983

TWENTY-THREE

CIAN O'MAHONEY reports on an old favourite back on the centre of the Dutch stage... and takes a look at the new generation cast alongside him

HOLLAND'S YOUNG GENERATION

HOLLAND'S fortunes have gone into decline over the past three years. But there could be brighter times ahead. The present generation of youngsters is the most exciting to emerge since the late sixties – the time when the basis for the success of the seventies was laid.

Here is an ABC of the Dutch "New Wave".

Marco van BASTEN (18), Ajax striker, uncapped. Described by national coach Rijvers as having "unlimited possibilities". Two-footed, heads well, reads the game well, a beautiful mover. Scored in his first game for Ajax as a 17-year-old, coming on as a substitute for Cruyff. His all-round skills have led to inevitable comparisons with the Dutch Master. Being carefully nursed along by Ajax. If he fulfils his potential could be the biggest thing to happen to Dutch football since Cruyff.

Peter BOEVE (25), Ajax left-back, 4 caps. Late developer who would seem to have established himself as Holland's new left-back. Fast, hard-working, somewhat wild defensively, but good coming forward, genuinely left-footed. Made his international debut last May at Wembley.

Rene van der GUP (21), Lokeren right-winger, 2 caps. A goal-scoring winger who likes to cut inside with fast acceleration. Possesses old-style Dutch arrogance, a commodity in short supply in Dutch football of recent times. Excellent debut against Ireland last September, laying on a goal in the first minute of the game. Has a lot of class but is often accused of laziness and inconsistency. Up to this season he had only played in second-rate teams which may excuse his "bit of a lad" approach to the game. Bought to replace Regor Lato beside the Dane Preben Larsen in the Lokeren attack. Scored a hat-trick which knocked holders Standard Liege out of the Belgian Cup last month.

Ruud GULLIT (20), Feyenoord midfielder, 6 caps. Like Vanenburg and Rijkaard has a Surinamese father and a Dutch mother. Played for Haarlem since he was 16, star of side which won promotion and a UEFA Cup place in consecutive seasons before leaving this summer for Feyenoord. Drifts in and out of the game, lacks aggression, but very gifted. He is good in the air and his nonchalant style belies his ability to suddenly accelerate. Scored with a thunderous shot in European Championship game last September against Ireland.

Rene HOFMAN (21), Roda JC left-winger, 1 cap. A neat, nippy player who

made his debut against Malta. A transfer to a bigger club might be necessary to improve his prospects of further caps.

Willem KIEFT (20), Ajax striker, 6 caps. Golden Boot winner as last year's top scorer in Europe. This modest goalscorer is the first to admit his production has a lot to do with the back-up service laid on by Cruyff, Jesper Olsen, Lerby etc. at Ajax. Less happy in the Dutch shirt in which he has only scored once (last March at Hampden). In and out of his club this season, he has still managed ten goals at the half-way point in the league.

Edwin KOEMAN (21), Groningen left-midfield, uncapped. Rijvers brought him to PSV where he spent three seasons without ever really breaking through. But PSV obviously believe in him as a man for the future as they "rented" him to his present club for just one year. Left-footed player with a refined style and a cracking shot.

Ronald KOEMAN (19), Groningen centre-midfield/sweeper, uncapped. Edwin's younger brother. Tough customer, hard to shake off the ball. Plays with a steady concentration unusual for one of his years. Good technique, rather affected style.

Jurrie KOOLHOF (23), PSV striker, 4 caps (all as substitute). Joint top scorer at half-way stage in Dutch league with 15 goals in first full season in first division. Goalscorer in the Johnny Rep tradition, relying on skill rather than strength, he can also play on the wing. The lobbed goal he scored in the 4-0 victory over Ajax testified to his vision and technique. A better long-term bet than Kieft to fit into the national team before van Basten comes along.

Edward METGOD (23), Haarlem goalkeeper, 1 cap. Younger brother of Johnny, Real Madrid's libero. A bright spot in a country with gloomy goalkeeping standards. Debut against France last November. Being personally coached by Jan Jongbloed – Holland's "mad" goalkeeper of the '74 World Cup.

Edo OPHOF (23), Ajax right-back, 6 caps. Short and fast. Better defensively than Keje Molenaar and Rijkaard, two other members of the Ajax panel who have played internationally at right-back. Natur-

ally aggressive, needs to be careful that he doesn't turn into a "hard man". Limited coming forward. Penalty-taker. Two goals for Holland: one against Greece, the other a penalty against Malta.

Frank RIJKAARD (20), Ajax central defender, 6 caps. Singled out by Rijvers as the most mature of the young generation last season, he has fallen into disrepute since he asked to be substituted at half-time v. France. Suffering loss of form and not sure of a regular place at Ajax. Playing as a central defender may improve his game in the long term, but it is not his natural position and it saps his confidence. Beautiful laconic ball-control, full of slick touches. Possible Dutch libero of the future if his defending improves.

Michel VALKE (23), Feyenoord left-midfield, 5 caps. Came to PSV with Erwin Koeman and finds himself farmed out like Koeman for a year after three seasons in Eindhoven. Never came good there, not helped by harsh criticism from coach Libregts who didn't give him a protracted run last season. Labelled the "new van Hanagsem" as a young player. He is very left-footed and also comes from Rotterdam, but the similarities end there. Coincidentally though, he made his debut as substitute for van Hanagsem in the latter's farewell international in 1979. He was very good against Italy in the Mundialito tournament in '81. Now having a new lease of life at Feyenoord under van Hanagsem's wing.

Gerald VANENBURG (18), Ajax mid-field/right-wing, 4 caps. A little wizard with the ball, his virtuosity has earned him the title of "Ajax's Paganini" – quite a compliment with Cruyff and Olsen in the same team! He can become the central figure in Holland's side of the 80s if he learns to use his light-footed artistry and remarkable skills in a team context and not just as ends in themselves. Holland's answer to Ardiles and Giresse.

Jan WOUTERS (22), Utrecht midfielder, 1 cap. Holland is overflowing with young players with technique on the ball, but there is still a dearth of the Neeskens-type ball-winner. Wouters came on as substitute v. France to mark Platini. He was comprehensively wrong-footed as the French master shot home France's second goal. It is still too early to say whether Wouters will make the international grade.

→ Also in this issue...

p32 All was not happy at reigning Italian champions Juventus. According to Keir Radnedge, they were in danger of losing their Serie A title to Roma and losing some of their star players as well.

He wrote: "Life with the expensively constructed 'new' Juventus is proving such a let-down that Michel Platini may 'retire' to the NASL next year, Zbigniew Boniek might move to Bayern Munich, and Paolo Rossi – World Cup hero of last summer – could be sold to Milan."

Although Juve would surrender their league crown to Roma, the three stars stayed – and in 1985 helped the club win its first European Cup.

p20 Uruguayan club Penarol had just secured a treble, adding the domestic league title to earlier Libertadores Cup success and Inter-Continental Cup victory [against European champions Aston Villa].

p24 Recently appointed England captain Bryan Robson was already being hailed as a Manchester United "great" by Derick Allison, who wrote that the midfielder "may not have the grace of [Bobby] Charlton, the lightning skills of [Denis] Law or the genius of [George] Best, but this season his influence at international and club level can have been matched by very few players in the world.

"Robson's strength is his many strengths. He is an all-rounder, the most complete footballer in Britain, possibly Europe."

p38-39 To show our global reach, we ran a feature on Africa, focusing on football in Tanzania where Pan Africans of Dar Es Salaam had broken the title monopoly of Simba and Young Africans, who had won 12 of the last 14 league titles between them.



German referee Robert Hoyzer was found guilty of fixing a match in the first round of the German Cup, between Bundesliga club Hamburg and second-tier side Paderborn. Paderborn were trailing 2-1 at half-time but, with Hoyzer's help, eventually won the game 4-2.



Following Eric Cantona's kung-fu kick on a Crystal Palace fan, and his subsequent lengthy ban, *World Soccer* suggested he may have played his last game for Manchester United. However, he returned in October 1995 and was voted that season's Footballer of the Year.



A club focus on Argentinos Juniors suggested that, although he left two years earlier, the foundations for the club's first title the previous season were based on the approach of Diego Maradona, "playing good attacking soccer in an increasingly defensive soccer world".

There was a power shift taking place in Holland, where Eindhoven-based PSV were emerging at the top of the Dutch league and threatening to break the duopoly of Ajax and Feyenoord, who had won the previous 10 Eredivisie titles between them.



Under the headline "Black Panther Strikes", *World Soccer* carried a short report on Eusebio's recent hat-trick against Turkey in a World Cup qualifier and the fact that the Benfica striker was on the verge of creating an individual scoring record in the Portuguese league.

■ EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Crowd problems spoil big event

Violence overshadows emergency hosts' best efforts to do the African Nations Cup proud

Victorious... Ivory Coast skipper Yaya Toure and his team celebrate



Initially put in doubt by Morocco's desire to postpone the finals due to fears over the Ebola virus, and then overshadowed by violence that left Africa's showcase sports event sullied and bruised, it is fair to say that this year's African Nations Cup had more than its fair share of problems.

Yet even though they had only a little over two months to prepare themselves as substitute hosts, the tiny former Spanish colony of Equatorial Guinea came close to what would have been a remarkable success story, had it not been for the unfortunate scenes in the final week.

With a population of less than one million, the previously reclusive and

repressive country – rich in oil resources but clearly a rampant kleptocracy – came to the rescue of the tournament when stepping in to replace the Moroccans as the host nation. And initially they earned themselves unusually positive publicity, enhanced by decent crowds and an opening fortnight of decent football.

The four stadiums in Bata, Ebibeyin, Malabo and Mongomo had to be hastily enhanced for the tournament, but the newly laid pitches held firm and the rain stayed, largely, away.

The first worrying signs of what lay ahead, however, came during the hosts' quarter-final clash with Tunisia, in which

Mayhem... Ghana fans spill onto the bottle-strewn running track surrounding the pitch after being attacked during the semi-final in Malabo



an attack on the referee at the end of the game went largely unpunished. Days later there came the crowd violence in Malabo during Equatorial Guinea's semi-final against Ghana.

That only 34 people were injured must be considered something of a miracle, given the amateurish and ultimately dangerous security operation that flouted all the basics of proper crowd control.

The violence erupted after the referee from Gabon, who neighbours Equatorial Guinea had knocked out earlier in the tournament, gave Ghana a first-half penalty in what looked a correct call but which the locals interpreted to be an act of



“Being champion of Africa is something they can never take away from you”

Ivory Coast coach Herve Renard

revenge for the elimination of his country. Second-half decisions added to the tense atmosphere before it all unravelled after Ghana's third goal, with rocks, glass and bottles raining down on visiting fans, who fled onto the pitch.

Riot police brought in from Angola caused most of the injuries as they stormed the main stand to chase away

missile-throwing locals, while a helicopter hovered dangerously to try to force fans from another part of the stadium.

CAF officials, looking flustered, argued among each other on the field as the match was stopped for 34 minutes near the end – which sparked further violence in nearby streets, the likes of which had never previously been seen in this part of the world. Yet, despite this, CAF called the ensuing criticism “western imperialism” as it refused to take responsibility for poor organisation.

On the pitch, victory for Ivory Coast finally ended a run of bitter disappointment for their so-called “golden

generation” as they were at last able to call themselves champions instead of chokers.

Heavily fancied in the five previous Nations Cups, the Ivorians had flopped on each occasion, leaving stars such as Didier Drogba and Didier Zokora, both with over 100 caps, to depart the international arena without a major title.

But there were still other veterans around to play a pivotal role as “The Elephants” won only their second title.

The Ivorians had lost the Final on penalties in 2006 and 2012, but the winning kick in this year's dramatic shoot-out victory over Ghana in the Final came from goalkeeper, Boubacar Barry,



Confrontation...the referee is protected by stewards after Tunisia are eliminated

who first went to the Nations Cup in 2006 along with the Toure brothers, Kolo and Yaya, and Siaka Tiene. Spot-kick hero Barry only played in the Final as a late injury replacement, but Kolo Toure and Tiene were ever present throughout the six matches in tiring conditions.

The early rounds of the tournament saw Cameroon, Senegal, South Africa and the 2013 runners-up Burkina Faso all sent home early. Mali also went out, despite not losing a game, after the drawing of lots for only the third time in tournament history after finishing level. Along with Guinea, they drew 1-1 in each of their three group games and could only be separated by the cruelty of a draw – setting off yet another debate over other types of tiebreakers.

CAF president Issa Hayatou was originally supposed to do the draw minutes after the teams played out their 1-1 game against each other. But, professional politician that he is, Hayatou balked at the idea of being responsible for one team's elimination. He postponed the brief ceremony to the following day and made each country send a representative instead to grab one of the two balls placed in a small glass bowl.

Guinea's Amara Dobo, a finance director in the ministry of sport deputised to the odious task, can now have future presidential aspirations such was the acclaim he received when he picked right.

Top-ranked Algeria fell in the last eight, as did Congo and Guinea, but Tunisia's elimination at that stage was an utter horror after an appalling refereeing decision allowed Equatorial Guinea a last-gasp penalty equaliser before they went on to beat the north Africans 2-1 in extra time.

Such was the Tunisian fury that they

chased the referee, Rajindraparsad Seechurn of Mauritius, down the tunnel, with players seeking to kick and punch him. However, the only punishment meted out was a US\$50,000 fine as CAF seemed more incensed about insinuations they had cheated than the attempted attack on a match official. Tunisia must apologise by the end of March for saying the result was fixed or risk being banned from the next Nations Cup.

Equatorial Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo were surprise

Drawing lots had not been seen at the African Nations Cup since 1988, when Algeria went through at the expense of the Ivory Coast

semi-finalists but it was no surprise that both were easily beaten.

DR Congo qualified for the knockout stage without winning a single group game. Three draws proved enough to get them into the quarter-finals, where they came from 2-0 down to beat neighbours Congo 4-2 in one of the best games of the tournament. But then they lost 3-1 to the Ivorians in the semi-finals and only got the bronze medal after a penalty shoot-out against Equatorial Guinea. It seems bizarre that DR Congo finished third with a solitary win in six matches.

The Final was supposed to be a heavyweight clash of talent but predictably the players were exhausted and so it

proved a game of poor quality, and one quickly forgotten – the penalty shoot-out aside. Ghana came closest to winning with a first-half shot from Christian Atsu that hit a post, but six matches in 22 days for both sides, mostly in extreme heat and humidity, left them unable to rise to the occasion.

The penalty drama was another matter. Ghana were 2-0 up after the Ivorians squandered their first two kicks but still lost 9-8, with goalkeeper Razak Brimah having his shot saved by Barry, who then collapsed theatrically claiming cramp. Maybe it was a touch of gamesmanship, too, but Barry received treatment then got up to score the winner. Each player who completed the game had a kick as the shoot-out dragged on with increasing drama and tension.

Ivory Coast coach Herve Renard had complained about his side's lack of spirit and unity during a poor qualifying campaign, but he seemed to galvanise them at the right time and write a little personal history for himself at the same time.

The winning coach with Zambia in 2012, when they edged the Ivorians on penalties, he became the first man to win the title with two different teams.

The tournament's best player award was given to Atsu although there were several other suitable candidates.

Possibly the find of the event was the young Equatorial Guinea goalkeeper Felipe Ovono, who made a string of superb saves in the six games he played. He was always going to be busy, given the motley collection of players in his team, but he symbolised the fact that a major continental competition can still be the stage for an unknown star to shine. **WS**

Six of the best Players of the tournament



CHRISTIAN ATSU
Ghana

The winger provided some telling input at crucial junctures.



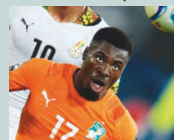
FELIPE OVONO
Equatorial Guinea

The goalkeeper's technical deficiencies were overshadowed by dramatic saves.



ANDRE AYEW
Ghana

His craft, guile and growing leadership role shone for the runners-up.



SERGE AURIER
Ivory Coast

Exciting full-back who added an extra dimension to attack.



CHANCEL MBEMBA
DR Congo

Protected the back four and controlled play intelligently.



BABA RAHMAN
Ghana

The 20-year-old full-back was the best young player of the tournament.

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■ AUSTRALIA

Socceroos strike gold

Coach Ange Postecoglou hailed for Asian Cup victory

He's making a habit of this, Ange Postecoglou. Five years ago, he was fighting fires after a turbulent start to his reign as coach of Brisbane Roar.

His brief back then was to reinvigorate a team that had lost both its way, and its coach, Frank Farina. He responded by clearing the place of experienced players such as Craig Moore, Danny Tiatto, Bob Malcolm, Charlie Miller and Liam Reddy. In their place came Erik Paartalu, Matt Smith and Kosta Barbarouses; hungry players who hadn't quite made it elsewhere.

At the heart of his team he put Thomas Broich – a midfielder whose lightness of touch on the ball had rarely been seen in the Australian domestic game. His potential had flagged under the weight of expectation back in his native Germany, where his coach at Borussia Monchengladbach, Dick Advocaat, once

Victorious...Matt McKay leads Australia on a lap of honour



High flyer...Cahill leaps to meet the ball during the 2-1 extra-time win over South Korea in the Asian Cup Final

sent him to train with the reserves for his perceived lack of physicality.

Broich found refuge in Brisbane – but, more importantly, he also found the freedom to express himself in a young, vibrant team that swept all before them under Postecoglou, after his reign had begun with a series of defeats and dwindling crowds.

Fast forward to 2014, and Postecoglou was again having to overcome the doubters as he sought to recalibrate an ageing, somewhat pedestrian Australia side that had just been "double-bageled" by France and Brazil in pre-World Cup friendlies 6-0, 6-0.

Out, almost immediately, went many



loss to Qatar in Doha and a nervy win over Saudi Arabia in London. The statistics were unflattering. Australia's 2014 was officially their worst-ever year, with just one win to show for their efforts. Fans were edgy, pundits critical.

Yet Postecoglou insisted the master plan was coming together. He'd purposely taken his team on the road – they played only one match at home in the entire 12 months – perhaps reasoning that a tournament on home soil would be such a welcome relief they couldn't help but improve. But there was much more method behind his thinking.

Postecoglou's team at the Asian Cup were supremely well prepared – not just mentally, but physically. They pressed so efficiently in the early part of the competition even falling behind to Kuwait on the opening night didn't faze them. By the end of the tournament, that fitness and toughness overcame a South Korea side who fought like tigers for a trophy that has eluded them for over 50 years.

But the Socceroos outlasted them, despite losing both Franjic and Robbie Kruse to injury – testament to Postecoglou's powers of preparation. He set his stall by a group of players who

"I'm not setting any limits on things. This is not the end of things for us but the beginning"

Australia coach Ange Postecoglou

believed in his ideals: his commitment to possession, building from the back, pressing and relentless attack, just as he'd introduced at Brisbane Roar. He ditched the double defensive screen and played with two number eights in a team looking to be proactive, rather than reactive.

Luongo, meanwhile, repaid his coach's faith by being named player of the tournament, and scoring in both the opening game and the Final.

It helped too, of course, that in Cahill, Australia had a goalscorer who loves the big stage and revelled in his leadership role. Bresciano, by contrast, played only a bit part and looks set to take his leave from the national stage. Cahill may now hang around a bit longer, as, undoubtedly, will Postecoglou.

His five-year contract may have looked wildly optimistic in the build-up to the Asian Cup, but now, the 49-year-old Greek-born Melbourne-born, who once described himself as "virtually unemployable" after a much-publicised TV bust-up with a former Socceroo, is virtually unsackable. **WS**

of the golden generation who had brought such prestige to the country in qualifying for three successive World Cups. Mark Schwarzer and Brett Holman retired, Lucas Neill got one more chance and was then ditched, Sasa Ogrenovski wasn't even given that. Luke Wilshire followed after being exiled from the final World Cup party in Brazil, amid rumours – never confirmed – of drinking bouts and fall-outs.

Only the evergreen Tim Cahill, and master craftsman Mark Bresciano remained – the latter, in all probability, because he's apparent, Tom Rogic, continuously found himself on the treatment table.

The new breed – Mat Ryan, Ivan Franjic,



Triumph...Postecoglou

Jason Davidson, Trent Sainsbury and Mathew Leckie – were all given a chance, and more importantly, given responsibility.

In among them was the second incarnation of Broich: Massimo Luongo, found in the unlikely surrounds of Swindon Town in England's third tier. Like Broich, he had the world at his feet as a teenager, training at Tottenham Hotspur with such stars as Luka Modric and Gareth Bale. But he needed to find a true believer in his talents – and Postecoglou was that man.

"Judge me on the Asian Cup" was Postecoglou's mantra as the Socceroos stumbled their way through a raft of unconvincing friendly displays. A goalless draw with the UAE in Abu Dhabi, a narrow



● Turn over for John Duerden's review of the 2015 Asian Cup



Asian Cup 2015

A year ago all was rosy in the Japan garden and there was optimism about a possible quarter-final finish at the 2014 World Cup under the guidance of Alberto Zaccheroni. Instead, the team picked up a solitary point in Brazil and a lot of disappointment. While this year's Asian Cup managed to provide that place in the last eight, that was as far as it went and an exit at the hands of the United Arab Emirates was another setback.

That wasn't, officially at least, the reason why Javier Aguirre was fired in February; the Mexican's marching orders came as he is under investigation in Spain following match-fixing allegations. With Japan now looking for their third coach in the space of six months, the journey to becoming a major football power is not as straightforward as had been hoped.

The performances in Australia were fine in the group stage: seven goals scored and none conceded against Palestine, Iraq and Jordan. Keisuke Honda was playing well, even if Shinji Kagawa was not. But despite having possession and pressure against the UAE, they could only draw 1-1 and went out on penalties.

After the Final, the Tokyo media said that Japan could do with an attacker with

thrashing of a very disappointing Qatar – the 23-year-old displayed the skills that have had Manchester City offering deals, and Barcelona and Arsenal showing interest. The UAE are not a one-man team, however, with Ali Mabkhout's five goals winning him the golden boot to add to the one he collected at November's Gulf Cup.

Iraq won in 2007 but never really suggested they were capable of doing so again, despite reaching the semi-final.

There is hope for the future in the shape of Swindon Town's Yaser Kasim and the impressive Dhurgam Ismael on the left, and there was time for old warhorse Younis Mahmoud to show his will to win and calmness under pressure, scoring a "Panenka penalty" that helped his team overcome Iran. That was an unforgettable quarter-final at a sold-out Canberra Stadium. Iran were cruising 1-0 when Mehrdad Pooladi was sent off, but far from spoiling the game, it turned it into a classic. Extra-time ended 3-3 and a penalty shoot-out epic ended 7-6 in favour of Iraq.

It was unfortunate for Iran, who had looked solid in the group stage. The exit was disappointing, but coach Carlos Queiroz looks set to stay on for qualification for Russia 2018. And with young players

like Sardar Azmoun, scorer of the goal of the tournament, coming through, the signs are promising.

The same can be said for China, who went out to Australia in the quarter-finals. After two first-round exits,

"I told him never to do it again because it almost gave me a heart attack"

UAE coach Mahdi Ali after Omar Abdulrahman's "Panenka" penalty against Japan

the pace, confidence and finishing skills of South Korea's Son Heung-min. The Bayer Leverkusen striker scored his third of the tournament in the 91st minute of the Final to equalise against Australia. Son had missed the second group match, a 1-0 win over Kuwait and was one of several Korean players to be hit with a mystery virus. If that was a weak performance, Korea then went from strength to strength.

For those who saw them in the World Cup, the defence was unrecognisable, not conceding a single goal until the Final. A little luck and a lot better shape and organisation introduced by new coach Uli Stielike made a difference. The German endeared himself to the fans by being honest about the problems early on and then solving some of them. South Korea loves its national team again, with over a third of the population watching the Final.

If the Koreans were pragmatic rather than pretty, the UAE were perhaps the most exciting team, with the supremely talented Omar Abdulrahman impressing.

From the very first match – a 4-1



Commiserations...Azmoun of Iran (left) with Iraq's Ahmad Ibrahim after their epic quarter-final



Going home...Japan players look on after losing to the UAE on penalties

getting to the last eight was a triumph, especially as they won all three games. Some of the reaction was a little over the top, but understandably so given the country's desire for success. Alain Perrin took a young squad to Australia with Wu Lei and Sun Ke impressing, while goalkeeper Wang Dalei hit the headlines by asking a ballboy which way to dive for a Saudi Arabian penalty. The youngster said left and Wang followed his instructions to make the save.

Uzbekistan confirmed they are a team not quite able to make the step up to continental powerhouse status, losing 2-0 to South Korea in the quarter-finals. As well as veteran playmaker Server Djeparov, strikers Igor Sergeev and Sardor

Rashidov promise much for the future.

Of those that fell at the first stage, there were few surprises. Oman and Kuwait failed in Group A but while Oman got three points to the Blues' none, Paul Le Guen's men were a little disappointing, coming off a good Gulf Cup, a decent preparation period and three years of stability.

Saudi Arabia fancied their chances, and when they came back from a goal down to beat a physical North Korea 4-1 things were looking good. However, they paid the price for missing a penalty and then losing to China.

North Korea lost all three and while they improved after a dreadful opening performance against Uzbekistan, it was

too little too late. Qatar arrived in Australia as the continent's form team amid talk of using success here to build for Russia in 2018, but their defence fell apart in the opening game against UAE.

Palestine made plenty of friends but, as expected, lost all their games, while Ray Wilkins entertained more in press conferences as Jordan coach than his team did on the pitch. There was plenty of entertainment in general, with healthy attendances, even if some television viewing figures were disappointing.

Even before the Socceroos lifted the trophy, this was a tournament that was always going to be well-remembered in Australia – and South Korea too. Japan, however, have serious thinking to do. **WS**

Six of the best

Players of the tournament



OMAR ABDULRAHMAN
UAE

Asia's biggest talent shone on its biggest stage.



SON HEUNG-MIN
South Korea

An exciting talent showed that the big stars shine at the big moments.



KI SEUNG-YEUNG
South Korea

Asia's most elegant midfielder rarely put a foot or pass wrong.



MASSIMO LUONGO
Australia

Energetic, dynamic with an eye for a winning goal.



ALI MABKHOUT
UAE

Golden boot winner who was on fire.



DHURGHAM ISMAEL
Iraq

A classy left-back who got forward well.



■ SPAIN

The miracle of Ipurua

The rise and rise of little Eibar

In the coach's small office, tucked away under the stand at Eibar's Ipurua ground, the walls are lined with pennants, running round the top of the room. One of them is from Real Sociedad, but pretty much all ▶





► of the others are from clubs you have probably never have heard of: Sestao, Tudelano, Alfaro, Santutxu, Urduliz, Arenas de Armilla. These are clubs from Spain's lower levels, mostly from the north, and the Basque Country in particular. Together, they mark Eibar's journey and reveal something of their identity and the enormity of their achievement.

Real Sociedad, over on the far wall, were the first team Eibar played this season – and the first team they had ever played in Spain's Primera Division. It felt appropriate, somehow. Real Sociedad are the other team from the province of Gipuzkoa and at kick-off all 22 players were Spanish, the first time that had happened in any La Liga game for four years. Moreover, 13 of the players were Basque and nine were from Gipuzkoa.

But there was an even more striking statistic. Of Eibar's starting XI, eight had played for the club in the second tier and seven had played for them in the Segunda Division B – Spain's four-group, 80-team third tier. Only one of the Eibar side had ever played top-flight football before.

This is not Eibar's natural place. They are in among the big boys for the first time in their history. They had come close only once before, a decade ago, and back then Gaizka Garitano played for them. Now, aged 39, he is their coach. He has led them to two consecutive promotions and is now seeking to lead them to survival.

That Eibar sat 10th after 23 games is a miracle. It's not just that they are the smallest team in the first division, it is that they were arguably the smallest in the second; they weren't even a big club in the Segunda Division B. There were only

5,173 people at Eibar's first game in the top flight but Ipurua was full and, as a percentage, few clubs can boast such an impressive ability to mobilise the population. There are only 27,378 people in the city and there isn't even a hinterland to draw from as Eibar sits in the Ego valley, green rolling hills surrounding it.

Bilbao is half an hour away and San Sebastian a little further in the other direction – home, respectively, to Athletic and Real Sociedad; two clubs infinitely bigger than Eibar, yet two clubs looking up at them in the league table.

To put Eibar's size into context, you could put the city's entire population into the Camp Nou and still have room for 71,000 people. The best seats in the house at Ipurua are not even in the house; the best seats are in the two blocks of flats that tower over the main stand. Not that it



Prime location...two tower blocks offer the best view

"I don't think we're really conscious of what we have done yet"

Eibar coach Gaizka Garitano

would take a block of flats to tower over it; it is being extended now but when the season started, there were just five rows of seats there. As for their shirt sponsor, that's a local scrap metal merchants.

This is David's little brother taking on Goliath. With his catapult taken from him. Eibar's entire budget would not cover the wages of Cristiano Ronaldo and they have spent next to nothing on players. "We had Jota here last year, our best player, and he went to Brentford," says Garitano. "This

year, Raul Albentosa has gone to a lower level, but earning five or six times what he was earning here..."

Eibar almost paid even more dearly for being small; they were close to becoming victims of their own success, punished for overachieving. They led the second tier last year but seemed destined to be denied their place in the top flight. According to a law theoretically designed to ensure sound financial management, their social capital had to be at least 25 per cent of the average expenses of all the Segunda Division teams (minus the two biggest and the two smallest).

The club had never been in debt and were managed soundly, but here they were obliged to take their capital to €2,146,525



Big draw...Real Madrid arrive in Eibar



David and Goliath...Garitano's Eibar take on Real Madrid

by raising over €1.7m in a share issues. If not, through no fault of their own, instead of promotion they faced relegation back to the Segunda Division B. Remarkably, fans from round the world responded. "I think they were moved by the injustice," says Garitano. Shares were sold, Eibar were saved and the club took up its rightful place in the first division.

It is a place they may keep too; another miracle to go with consecutive promotions. Eibar are on a difficult run right now, but six months into their first ever top flight season, they are better placed than anyone could have ever expected. "I don't think we're really conscious of what we have done yet," admits Garitano. "Maybe one day we'll look back and realise what this means.

"For now, we're just trying to enjoy being in the first division, but it's not easy."

Nobody said it was easy. Nobody said it was even possible.



Historic...Eibar (in red and blue) take on Real Sociedad

“Football can unify, but bombs tear my people apart”

In May 2014, the Lazio midfielder only just avoided bombings in the Nigerian city of Jos which killed 118 people. He now wants an end to suicide bomb attacks

“ Shortly after the bombings in Jos, you said that the incident had left a terrible blemish and a deep scar.

Has the memory faded?

The memory can never disappear. I recall vividly the chill when I saw the number of casualties. I only thank God for my life; grateful for the 20 minute grace God gave me that day. There is no moment when I hear about any bombings that this particular one doesn't come back to me. I doubt it will ever fade.

Days later, three people died in another explosion that targeted fans watching the UEFA Champions League Final...

With more than 250 ethnic groups, football brings the people together. People who don't speak the same language celebrate together when there is a goal. Innocent people are no more because of football. The government seriously need to step up security across the country. I'm not here to judge the government, but I feel uncomfortable that the population suffered a lot. Football can unify but bombs tear my people apart.

The terror group involved, Boko Haram, has fought a five-year insurgency against Nigeria's government, leaving 10,000 people dead last year alone. What do you think is the answer?

I just want to appeal to the government that this is a very important issue and they need to find an everlasting solution. The death toll from suicide bombings— it's human lives we are talking about here. There is no value for human life, it's depressing. We are living a life that we are not sure of tomorrow. It's not even a natural disaster but a man-made disaster. Humans killing humans makes it more sickening.

Why do you think so many footballers and other celebrities are reluctant to use their influence and speak up and demand an end to this?

I cannot speak for others, but it's necessary for us to speak up. It's easy for me to come out and say “I was lucky to escape” or “please protect Jos”. What about those in northern states like Yobe, Borno or Maiduguri? The other people who cannot talk? They all suffer. Some people feel safe in their “comfort zones” because the bomb does not affect them directly, but the death of a fellow citizen is unfortunately the sad end of one of us. I may live far away in Europe but above all I am one of them. I am not detached from the world around me or the reality of the damage going on a daily basis. Home is where the heart is because I still have my parents, my childhood friends and compatriots who eat and love football at home.

Attention has shifted towards general elections in Nigeria. Are you optimistic that the incumbent or incoming president may finally bring an end to the insecurity?

I hope so. But no one should play politics with the problem of insecurity. I want to play in front

of a safe, happy and united country when I get the chance to represent my country. We all speak of growing old, to see our grandchildren, not our lives being cut short by cruel people. We need to act to save our country. I wish there is a button I can just press that will put an end to it. I put myself in the shoes of those victims. Nigeria is my country and I cannot wish death on anyone. It's a collective effort. The president cannot do it alone. There is a need for a holistic approach to solving this problem.

Football in Nigeria is blighted by problems on and off the pitch. There is a lot of soul-searching going after the team's failure to qualify for the African Nations Cup. Where did it all go wrong?

We can't point fingers, we failed collectively. The disappointment was obvious during the tournament. I did not watch it, that's how low I felt because we should be playing in it.

National coach Stephen Keshi's position is yet to be decided. Does this situation affect the players?

It does because one minute you have a coach, the next you hear something else. We should have consolidated on our Nations Cup success and the World Cup run, but we failed to capitalise on the positives. If things are stable on and off the pitch, we can fly high. If we play every game with zeal, collective dedication and team work I am sure we will return to the summit of African football. It is easy to talk, but first we must put our house in order and perform on the pitch.

You've been linked with a move to England this summer. How do you feel about that?

I have been linked with more than 10 clubs but I belong to Lazio. As a young footballer, I want to grow and play in European competitions. In life it has to be one step at a time. It could be with Lazio, but I believe God has a bigger plan for me, beyond the understanding of any man.

Interview by Oluwashina Okeleji



Horror...explosions rocked the Nigerian city of Jos in May last year, killing 118 people



“I am not proud of what is happening to our country. Nigerians are generally happy people and these people deserve better than this”

“Lampard and Gerrard moving has raised the profile of MLS for British players who get the chance to go now”

The Scotland international explains why he's quit the English second tier to play in Major League Soccer



After playing in a UEFA Cup Final with Celtic and winning the FA Cup with Wigan Athletic, what made you choose underachieving Chicago Fire?

I have always had an ambition to experience a different country. I've played at the top level in Scotland and England. Everything just sort of happened in a whirlwind six days when I came to Chicago to look around. When I met the manager, Frank Yallop, and what he said about the plans, made me want to buy into what Chicago could become.

How are you getting on with your new team-mates?

We got the perfect chance to get to know each other when we went to England for our pre-season training camp. It's the perfect scenario. You have breakfast, lunch and dinner together, and train together. You try and make as much of an effort to sit at different tables as possible and get to know the people you are going to play with. From a football point of view, you try and learn people's strengths and weaknesses and they do the same with you.

How valuable is Chicago's huge indoor training facility in a city that had 21 inches of snow in January?

I just missed that snow because I had flown back to start my removal process. Chicago came to a standstill. I'm told it was one of the worst snowstorms in a long time. But when I was at Celtic we had a couple of the worst winters and people were stranded on the motorway overnight because of the snowdrifts. The Fire training dome will really pay for itself because we won't have any disruption.

San Jose Earthquakes coach Dominic

Kinnear says MLS clubs must switch to soccer-specific stadiums. What are your impressions of Chicago's Toyota Park?

I'm told the Fire used to play at Soldier Field, where the Chicago Bears are, which held 66,000. That's too big. The Fire have had this 20,000 stadium since 2006. It was a big thing for the club to get its own ground and we have a good following of 16,000. To get 16,000 in a season that was not great is a good turnout, but hopefully we can get higher than that. It's a bit like Wigan in that we are competing with other sports. Wigan is a rugby league town, while Chicago has NBA, NFL, ice hockey and two really big baseball teams.

Did you sound out your old Celtic team-mate Darren O'Dea about an MLS move because he played for Toronto?

I didn't speak to Darren in January, although I had previously. I did the same with Kenny Miller and Barry Robson, who I played with for Celtic and Scotland. My friend Steve Guppy, another ex-Celtic player, was a coach out there. And I spoke to Jamie Smith, who won the MLS title with Colorado Rapids and came through the youth team with me at Celtic. He played in our 2003 UEFA Cup run and is now coaching. I always spoke to people generally about moving to the US, but when the chance actually came I did not want to seek anyone's opinion because it's something I had to figure out for myself if I wanted it.

There has been a rise in status of MLS in the eyes of British players, with Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard signing up. Did that encourage your decision?

It probably did, though only subconsciously. Their signings certainly raised the profile of the league in the UK. But there are other top

foreign footballers moving, too. Kaka is going to Orlando and David Villa is joining Lampard at New York. Robbie Keane is still there and there are a lot of top US players at Seattle, like Clint Dempsey. All of that makes an impact on you. Lampard and Gerrard moving has raised the profile of the MLS for any British players who get the chance to go now.

Fire start the season with a trip to LA Galaxy. Do you know Robbie Keane?

Unfortunately I only got to train with Robbie a couple of times when he came to Celtic on loan from Spurs because I was injured. He was brilliant at Celtic, I think he got 20 goals, and he has been doing just as well for Galaxy.

One of the hardest adjustments for British players in the MLS is the humidity in summer time games. How will you cope?

It is a hurdle I will have to overcome. Some of the day kick-offs in summer will be testing, but I have played in pre-season matches in July in the US with Celtic, Aston Villa and Wigan.

Are you worried about the effect the long flights between North American cities might have on your body?

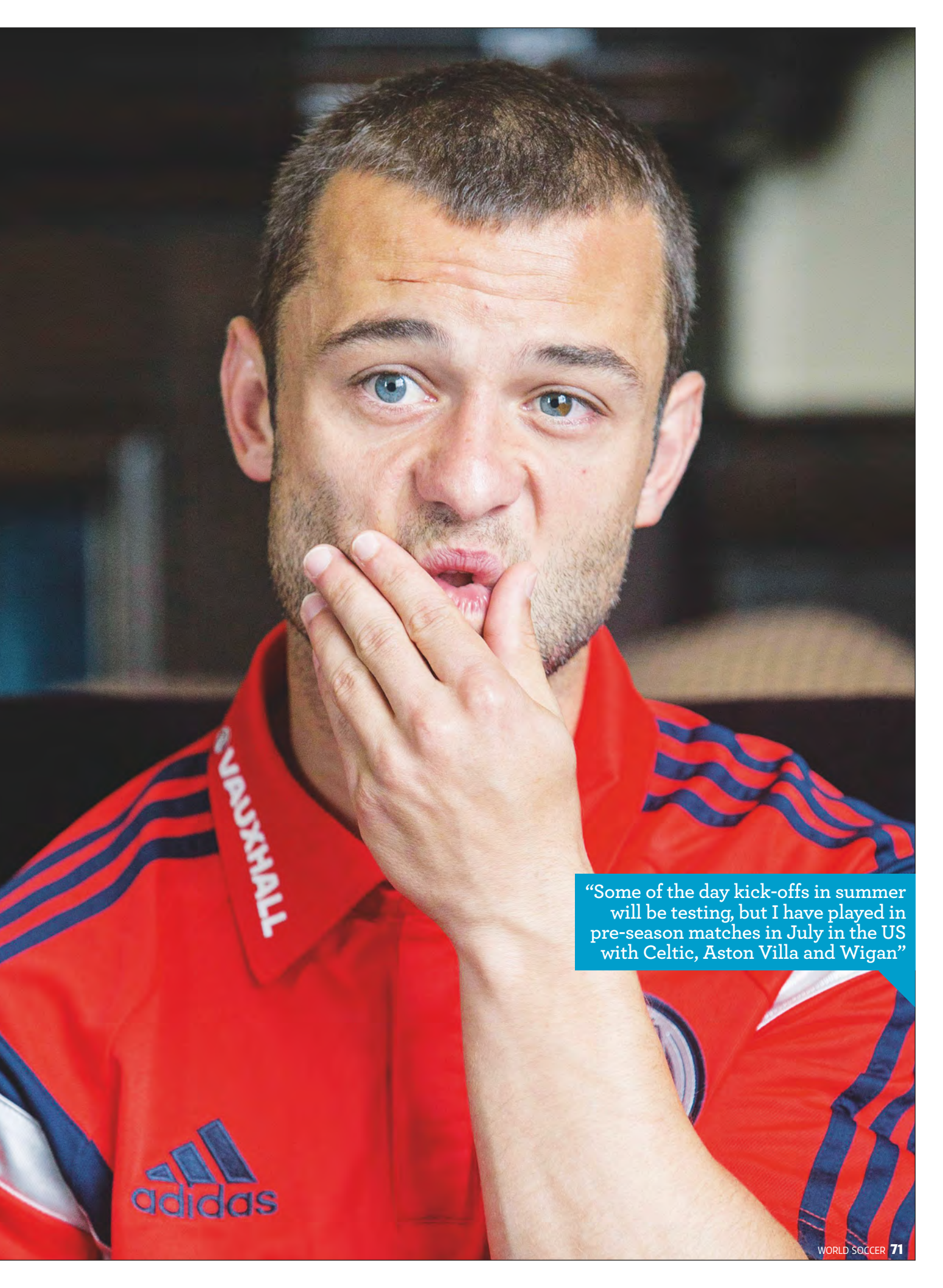
The schedule is worked out sensibly so you are not going to be in Vancouver and then LA. I think the major difference in MLS is that we don't fly back home on the night of the game, as European clubs often do. They fly back the day after. I think that helps the body recover.

Is Scotland manager Gordon Strachan planning to come and watch you in MLS?

I am not sure. I had a few phone calls with the manager and he is happy about the prospect of me coming to play in a top league. His only advice was "just go where you are the most wanted".

Interview by Phil Gordon

● See page 86 for MLS season preview



“Some of the day kick-offs in summer will be testing, but I have played in pre-season matches in July in the US with Celtic, Aston Villa and Wigan”

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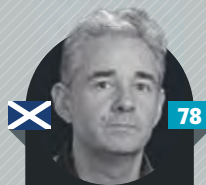
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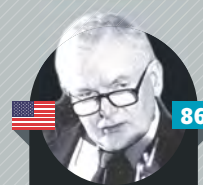
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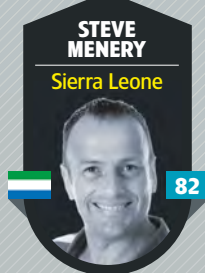
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PAUL GARDNER
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STEVE MENERY
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TIM VICKERY
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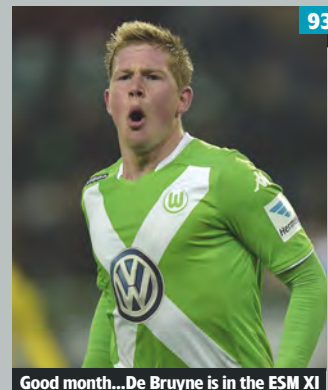
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Line-up...South Korea at the Asian Cup

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Good month...De Bruyne is in the ESM XI

JANUARY 21-FEBRUARY 16, 2015

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

►Wednesday Jan 21

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: The second round of group games gets under way with Congo beating Gabon 1-0 and hosts Equatorial Guinea drawing 0-0 with Burkina Faso.

ENGLAND: Andros Townsend's penalty gives Tottenham Hotspur a 1-0 victory over Sheffield United in the home leg of their League Cup semi-final.

FRANCE: Giant-killing fourth-tier side Grenoble, who beat Marseille in the previous round, are knocked out of the French Cup by Boulogne.

SCOTLAND: Celtic reclaim top spot in the league with a 4-0 victory at home to Motherwell. Kris Doolan scores four goals as Partick Thistle thrash Hamilton Academical 5-0.

SPAIN: Chinese property tycoon Wang Jianlin, who is worth \$13.2bn according to *Forbes* magazine, agrees to buy a 20 per cent stake in Atletico Madrid for €45m. Jan Oblak saves

Lionel Messi's 85th-minute penalty at Camp Nou, but the Argentinian puts home the rebound as Barcelona beat Atletico Madrid 1-0 in the first leg of their Spanish Cup quarter-final.

Thursday Jan 22

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Captain Yassine Chikhaoui's last-minute header gives Tunisia a 2-1 victory over Zambia. The other game in Group B, between Cape Verde and DR Congo, is goalless.

ASIAN CUP: Two extra-time goals from Son Heung-min put South Korea in the semi-finals as they beat Uzbekistan 2-0. They are joined by Australia, who beat China 2-0 with two goals from Tim Cahill.

ITALY: Holders Napoli go through to the quarter-finals of the Italian Cup by beating Udinese on penalties.

SPAIN: Sixteen-year-old Norwegian wonderkid Martin Odegaard joins Real Madrid from Stromsgodset for a reported fee of €4m. Real also agree

to buy Brazilian midfielder Lucas Silva from Cruzeiro for €14m. The club tops the Deloitte football rich list for a 10th successive year.

Friday Jan 23

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Senegal draw 1-1 with South Africa to top Group C, after Ghana beat Algeria 1-0 earlier in the day.

ASIAN CUP: Defending champions Japan go out on penalties to the United Arab Emirates after drawing 1-1. Iraq also go through on penalties, beating 10-man Iran in a shoot-out after twice squandering the lead to draw 3-3 in extra time. Iran's Mehrdad Pooladi is sent off.

ENGLAND: Fourth-tier Cambridge United earn a replay at Old Trafford by holding Manchester United to a goalless draw in the FA Cup.

FRANCE: Despite Kevin Gomis being sent off, Nice beat Marseille 2-1.

GREECE: Niki Volou are relegated from the Super League. The team



from Thessaly, who broke league rules by failing to pay their players, have not been able to fulfil their last five fixtures. They will start next season in the second-tier Football League with a six-point deduction.

Saturday Jan 24

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Ivory Coast and Mali draw 1-1, as do Cameroon and Guinea, to leave all four teams exactly equal with one game each to go in Group D.

AUSTRALIA: Adelaide United restart the A-League after a break for the Asian Cup with a 7-0 thrashing of Newcastle Jets.

CONCACAF: Mexico beat Panama on penalties to win the continental under-20 tournament. Both teams qualify for this summer's Under-20 World Cup in New Zealand, along with Honduras and the USA.

ENGLAND: Bradford City come from two down to win 4-2 at Chelsea in the fourth round of the FA Cup. Manchester City lose 2-0 at home to Championship side Middlesbrough.

HOLLAND: Bottom of the Eredivisie, Dordrecht beat Excelsior 1-0 to end a 17-match winless run.

NORTHERN IRELAND: Cliftonville win the League Cup for a third consecutive season, beating Ballymena United 3-2 in the Final.

SPAIN: Cristiano Ronaldo is sent off but Gareth Bale's late penalty sees Real Madrid come from behind to win 2-1 against Cordoba.

Sunday Jan 25

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Congo beat Burkina Faso 2-1 to top Group A, while hosts Equatorial Guinea see



Going through...Son Heung-min (face down) scored twice as South Korea beat Uzbekistan in the Asian Cup quarter-finals



Upset...Bradford knock Premier League leaders Chelsea out of the FA Cup

off Gabon 2-0 and join them in the quarter-finals.

BELGIUM: Anderlecht midfielder Steven Defour is greeted with a banner depicting his severed head before the game at his former club Standard Liege. He is sent off in the second half for kicking the ball at the home fans as Standard win 2-0.

FRANCE: League leaders Lyon beat Metz 2-0 and equal a club record of 10 successive home wins in Ligue 1.

WALES: Treble-chasing The New Saints clinch their first silverware of the season, beating Bala Town 3-0 in the League Cup Final.

Monday Jan 26

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Tunisia and DR Congo go through to the quarter-finals after a 1-1 draw. Cape Verde and 2012 champions Zambia go out after drawing 0-0.

ASIAN CUP: Goals from Lee Jung-hyub and Kim Young-gwon put South Korea in the Asian Cup Final for the first time since 1988 ➤



All square...DR Congo draw with Tunisia

Brazil

TIM VICKERY



Trouble...Palmeiras fans taunt police during their game with Corinthians last season

Modern stadiums and medieval behaviour

Allowing away fans to attend games is not always the best policy

Despite the many new and improved stadia that were built and upgraded for last year's World Cup, an age-old problem still haunts the domestic game's modern arenas: hooliganism.

In Sao Paulo, traditional rivals

Corinthians and Palmeiras both have new homes: Corinthians' new complex in Itaquera, built for the World Cup, and Palmeiras' Allianz Parque arena, which was not, but is seen by many as the best of the recent surge of Brazilian stadium-building.

Yet these plush new venues have remained ugly battlegrounds in the conflict between rival supporters that so blights the Brazilian game.

In July last year, in the first meeting between the two sides at the Arena Corinthians, visiting fans broke 250 seats. Fearing similar vandalism inside the ground and violence outside this February, Palmeiras tried to ban away fans for Corinthians' first visit to the Allianz Parque.

Initially the authorities agreed, but when Corinthians threatened not to turn up if their supporters were barred, a hurried compromise was arrived at with 10 per cent of the stadium ceded to away fans.

The scenes outside the ground were reminiscent of a war zone, with Palmeiras fans clashing with police as they attempted to charge the visiting supporters. Inside, Corinthians fans set about destroying seats and damaging the toilets.

The real damage, however, was to the Brazilian game's reputation. Scenes from outside the ground were widely televised and many potential new fans will feel less disposed to spend money visiting these fine new arenas.

Barring away supporters is always an admission of defeat, conceding that the authorities are unable to control the situation and that fans cannot be trusted to behave. But in contemporary Brazil there are reasons to believe there are times when an admission of defeat is the wisest policy.

An away club's allocation of tickets almost always goes to members of the organised fan groups, who are often little more than a rent-a-thug army. So when these groups are the beneficiaries of such decisions as to allow Corinthians fans to attend the game at Palmeiras, the right to go to the game is hardly a victory for the average Corinthians fan.

Things have been little better on the field, with the dismal display of the country's under-20 side at the South American Youth Championship in Uruguay.

With Brazil playing its first competitive games since the World Cup, it had been hoped that under coach Alexandre Gallo the youngsters would be able to show signs of a bright new future. Instead, they were almost a caricature of the senior side in recent years: physically strong and capable of tearing apart weak sides on the counter-attack, but utterly unable to find the guile and imagination to pass their way through stronger rivals.

Gallo's side finished fourth – behind champions Argentina, Colombia and Uruguay – and failed to score a single goal against any of the top three teams. They created virtually nothing in the way of chances and struggled to string more than three passes together.

All in all, it was hugely disappointing and much more will be expected of the side in June when they take part in the Under-20 World Cup in New Zealand. **WS**

► as they beat Iraq 2-0.

ARGENTINA: Former Argentina and Boca Juniors playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme announces his retirement. The 36-year-old, who had spells in Europe with Barcelona and Villarreal, played for Argentinos Juniors last season and had been expected to join Paraguayan club Cerro Porteno.

NEW ZEALAND: The Young All Whites beat Tahiti on penalties to win the Final of the OFC Under-17 Championship, in Pago Pago, American Samoa, and qualify for the Under-17 World Cup in Chile later this year. It was their fifth successive triumph in the competition.

POLAND: UEFA announces Poland will host the finals of the 2017 European Under-21 Championship.

PORTUGAL: Veteran striker Lima misses a penalty as leaders Benfica lose for only the second time in the league this season, going down 1-0 to a 90th-minute spot-kick from Sergio Oliveira at Pacos de Ferreira.

Tuesday Jan 27

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Goals from John Boye and Andre Ayew in the last 20 minutes see Ghana beat South Africa 2-1 and go through to the quarter-finals with Algeria, who finish second in Group C after beating Senegal 2-0.

ASIAN CUP: First-half goals from Trent Sainsbury and Jason Davidson give Australia a 2-0 win over United Arab Emirates in their semi-final at Newcastle's Hunter Stadium.

COLOMBIA: Santa Fe win 2-0 to beat Atletico Nacional 3-2 on aggregate and win the Colombian Super Cup, thus qualifying for this year's Sudamericana Cup.

ENGLAND: Branislav Ivanovic scores an extra-time winner as Chelsea beat Liverpool 2-1 on aggregate in their League Cup semi-final.

FIJI: Shalit Muni Reddy, who scored for Fiji in their 5-0 win over the Cook Islands in the OFC Under-17 Championship eight days earlier, dies while swimming with team-mates.

ITALY: Lazio beat Milan 1-0 to reach the semi-finals of the Italian Cup, despite Lorik Cana being sent off just before half-time.

Wednesday Jan 28

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Ivory Coast beat Cameroon 1-0 to top Group D, while Mali and Guinea – who both drew all three group games 1-1 – will draw lots to decide who joins them in the quarter-finals.

ARGENTINA: Three players are sent off as Nicolas Colazo scores the only goal of the play-off game to secure Boca Juniors' place in the ►

Scotland

PHIL GORDON



Rangers' rocky journey

Pain and uncertainty stalk debt-ridden club



What was billed as the last step in "The Journey" by Rangers just eight months ago has now become a tortuous path of uncertainty and the Glasgow club are facing an embarrassing reality that there might not be any Scottish top-flight football for them next season.

With spectacularly bad performances on and off the pitch, an appalling Ibrox balance sheet makes just as bad reading as match statistics, with Rangers lurching from one crisis to the next.

This season they were supposed to pass through Scotland's second-tier Championship and reach the Premiership. You cannot say "return" to the top division because there are plenty of rival supporters – and not just those of Celtic – who point out that this is a "new

Despair...the half-empty stands at Ibrox tell their own story as Rangers are knocked out of the Scottish Cup by Raith Rovers



Dissent...supporters protest against the Rangers board

Rangers" because the old club finished in 2012 when it went into liquidation.

The new team began life in the fourth tier in the 2012-13 season and fans readily signed up for what the club advertised as "The Journey", with more than 49,000 watching the win over East Stirling that August.

Fast forward to February 8, 2015. Seven days after being taunted by Celtic players as "too easy" in the first Glasgow derby since the liquidation, Rangers were knocked out of the Scottish Cup by Raith Rovers in front of just 11,000 at Ibrox.

A shock? Not really. Raith also beat Rangers last season in the Final of the Challenge Cup – a competition for lower-division teams – and Alloa Athletic did the same to Ally McCoist's side in December in this season's semi-finals, before he quit as manager.

Rangers lost five of their opening 20 games in the Championship – both home and away to Edinburgh

"This team at the moment is probably the worst Rangers team that's ever played for the club"

Former Rangers skipper Richard Gough

sides Hearts and Hibernian – and were 19 points adrift of leaders Hearts in early February. Hearts have the one automatic promotion place sewn up and Rangers' only hope is to progress through the play-offs, and that is no guarantee for a side described by former captain, Richard Gough, as "probably the worst ever".

But the football results pale in comparison to the financial figures. Rangers urgently required £3million just to keep going at the end of January. The need for money was revealed when the company reported a loss in its annual accounts last November of £8.3m for the 2013-14 season.

That followed a £16.2m loss for the year before. Remember, this new company is just over two years old, formed in July 2012, and has nothing to do with sizeable debts attached to the old club when it went out of business.

Quite how a new business could plunge £25m into





the red while operating in the lower levels of Scottish football seems beyond belief. "It's galling," said Queen of the South player-manager James Fowler, whose victory over Rangers was McCoist's last game in charge. "The way we run our club, we're restricted and always make sure we're in the black."

Rangers told the AIM Stock Exchange it planned to raise £8m in the next 12 months for capital to fund day-to-day needs. Auditors Deloitte signed off on the results but warned about a "material uncertainty" over the club's ability to continue.

The £3m loan came from Newcastle United owner Mike Ashley, who also owns nine per cent of Rangers, and is ready to provide a further loan of £10m. Many Rangers fans are not happy with Ashley's involvement, or the board, and some rioted outside the stadium before a Friday night match with Hearts in January.

Rangers' season-ticket holders dropped from 36,000 in 2013-14 to just over 17,000 this term, even though the team had stepped up a division. Fans have been staying away from games in greater numbers because they are unhappy with the board, who are involved in a complex war of attrition with several suitors who want to take control.

According to Scottish FA rules, English businessman

Ashley would not be able to own more than 10 per cent of the club unless he stopped his involvement with Newcastle and he will meet with the SFA in March. Yet Ashley still sanctioned the loan of five players from Newcastle to Rangers on transfer deadline day, which upset other Championship clubs.

The Ibrox mess is symbolised by the fact that McCoist quit before Christmas, but Rangers cannot afford to pay off his contract. He is therefore on "gardening leave", where he is paid to sit at home until December 2015.

McCoist's assistant Kenny McDowall took over and then bizarrely also put in his resignation. McDowall is still tied to the club for the next nine months, until his contract ends, and was in charge for the 2-0 Scottish League Cup semi-final defeat by Celtic and the Raith humiliation.

Further embarrassment came when goalkeeper Steven Simonsen was banned for two games, with one suspended, by the Scottish FA for breaking rules on gambling by betting on 55 matches. Rangers midfielder Ian Black had already been given a 10-game ban in 2013 for betting against his own team.

Few would risk a bet on Rangers being in the top flight in 2015-16. **WS**

► **Libertadores Cup** group stage with a 1-0 win over Velez Sarsfield.

ENGLAND: Tottenham Hotspur draw 2-2 at Sheffield United, to win 3-2 on aggregate, and will face Chelsea at Wembley in a repeat of the 2008 League Cup Final.

PORTUGAL: Luis Figo becomes the latest figure to announce that he will stand for the role of FIFA president.

SAUDI ARABIA: The national side win the Under-23 Gulf Cup of Nations in Bahrain, beating Kuwait 5-2 in the Final. The semi-final and Final were delayed by several days due to the death of Saudi Arabian king Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz.

SPAIN: Gabi and Mario Suarez are sent off as Atletico Madrid lose 3-2 at home to Barcelona and go out of the Spanish Cup 4-2 on aggregate. Team-mate Arda Turan is lucky not to join them as he throws a boot at an assistant referee but escapes with just a yellow card.

Thursday Jan 29

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Guinea go through to the quarter-finals after the drawing of lots.

GREECE: OFI are banned from playing in the Super League due to mounting debts and will not be allowed to fulfil Sunday's fixture at Atromitos. The Crete-based club, who had six points deducted earlier in the month for failing to honour the contract of former player Aleksander Pesic, are docked a further four points and drop into the relegation zone. League rules state that if two more fixtures are cancelled the club will be demoted from the top flight.

ITALY: Roma's Kevin Strootman will have to undergo further surgery after aggravating a long-standing knee injury in Sunday's 1-1 draw with Fiorentina. The Dutch midfielder, who missed the World Cup, has played just six Serie A games since March last year.

SPAIN: Villarreal are in the last four of the Spanish Cup, beating Getafe 2-0 on aggregate, and will face Barcelona. Espanyol meet Athletic Bilbao in the other semi-final.

Friday Jan 30

ASIAN CUP: UAE take third place with a 3-2 victory over Iraq, Ali Mabkhout scoring a penalty to claim his fifth goal of the tournament.

ENGLAND: Chelsea striker Diego Costa gets a three-match ban for stamping on Liverpool's Emre Can during Tuesday's League Cup semi-final and will miss Saturday's game against Manchester City.

FIFA: David Ginola surprises no one by confirming he will not stand in ►

► May's presidential election after failing to secure the backing of five football associations.

GERMANY: League leaders Bayern Munich suffer their heaviest Bundesliga defeat for six years, losing 4-1 at Wolfsburg in their first game after the six-week winter break.

Saturday Jan 31

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Equatorial Guinea beat Tunisia 2-1 and DR Congo come from two down to beat Congo 4-2 in the quarter-finals.

ASIAN CUP: An extra-time winner from sub James Troisi sees Australia beat South Korea 2-1 in the Final.

ENGLAND: Chelsea maintain their five-point lead at the top of the league with a 1-1 draw at home to second-place Manchester City.

GERMANY: Freiburg beat Eintracht Frankfurt 4-1 to send Borussia Dortmund bottom of the Bundesliga.

Sunday Feb 1

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Ivory Coast beat Algeria 3-1, Ghana beat Guinea 3-0 in the quarter-finals.

FRANCE: Lyon's seven-game winning streak in Ligue 1 ends with a goalless draw at Monaco.

ITALY: Torino win 5-1 against Sampdoria, for whom Samuel Eto'o makes his debut, as a substitute.

SCOTLAND: Celtic beat Rangers 2-0 in the 400th Old Firm derby to reach the Scottish League Cup Final.

Monday Feb 2

ENGLAND: As the transfer window closes, Premier League clubs take their spending to £130m – double the next highest-spending league, Italy's Serie A.

Tuesday Feb 3

ARGENTINA: Huracan are all but through to the group stage of the Libertadores Cup with a 4-0 win away to Alianza Lima of Peru in the first leg of their qualifying game.

HOLLAND: Full-back Jetro Willems receives the fastest red card in Eredivisie history, sent off after 29 seconds for a dangerous tackle on Gill Swerts, but PSV still manage to win 2-0 at NAC Breda.

ITALY: Fiorentina win 2-0 at Roma in the Italian Cup.

Wednesday Feb 4

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Ivory Coast reach the Final with a 3-1 victory over DR Congo.

FRANCE: Bastia will face Paris Saint-Germain in the League Cup Final on April 11 after beating Monaco 7-6 on penalties.

HOLLAND: PSV defender Jetro ►

PREVIEW



Great expectations
...Pat Fenlon

Republic or Ireland

SEAN CREEDON



Shamrock demand success

Hoop dreams put pressure on manager Fenlon

Two league titles in the past five years might be enough to keep most clubs happy, but when you're Shamrock Rovers that's clearly not enough. Current Northern Ireland manager Michael O'Neill led Rovers to back-to-back championships and became the first man to take the club into the group stage of the Europa League. But since O'Neill returned home in 2011, the Dublin club – who have been League of Ireland champions a record 17 times – have struggled.

Stephen Kenny was sacked rather hastily after just nine months in charge, in September 2012, and his replacement, Brian Laws, left at the end of that season

“It’s a strong league and I would say that there are no weak teams”

Shamrock Rovers manager Pat Fenlon

after Rovers failed to qualify for Europe. Trevor Croly also missed out on European qualification, so in August 2014 the board dispensed with his services and brought in the vastly experienced Pat Fenlon.

Fenlon, who turns 46 in March, has won the Irish league five times as a manager – three with Shelbourne and two with Bohemians – and twice took Hibernian to the Scottish Cup Final during his two years in charge of the Edinburgh club. Now he must prove his pedigree all over again with the Hoops.

“I was in charge for the last eight games of last season, and lost only one,” says Fenlon. “It’s a strong league and I would say that there are no weak teams. The two promoted clubs, Longford Town and Galway, are also good.”

“Dundalk, the defending champions, and St Pat’s, winners in 2013, will be thereabouts and of course Cork, who pushed Dundalk all the way last season, will be strong again.”

Cork’s challenge has been boosted by the arrival of local hero Liam Miller, the former international midfielder who joined Manchester United from Celtic a few years back, and has now returned home from a spell in Australia. “You don’t have to sell Cork

to a Corkonian,” said the club’s manager John Caulfield of the 33-year-old midfielder.

Bray Wanderers, who have new owners, will be experimenting with a new kick-off time of 5.45pm on Saturdays in an attempt to attract more local support, while Limerick – who have been playing at Munster Rugby’s famous Thomond Park – return to their spiritual home of Markets Field for the first time since 1984.

Following UCD’s relegation last year, there will only be three Dublin-based clubs in the top flight this season, the fewest in 30 years.

Shamrock made history last year when they fielded a B team in the second tier, but their reserve side has been replaced by South Dublin outfit Cabinteely this term.

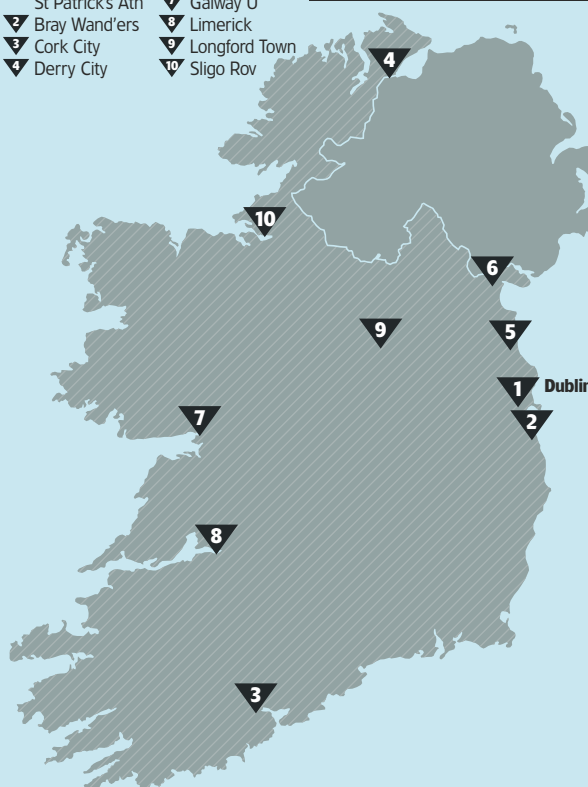
“I think it was a great idea and an ideal way to give young players a chance to impress,” says Fenlon of the experiment. “But the club simply cannot afford to field a second team at that level.” **WS**

KEY DATES
LEAGUE STARTS
March 6, 2015
LEAGUE ENDS
October 30, 2015

1 Bohemians
2 Shamrock Rovers
3 St Patrick's Ath
4 Bray Wanderers
5 Cork City
6 Derry City

5 Drogheda U
6 Dundalk
7 Galway U
8 Limerick
9 Longford Town
10 Sligo Rovers

LEAGUE OF IRELAND: PREMIER DIVISION 2015



OTHER SUMMER LEAGUES IN EUROPE: KEY DATES



Ready...Belarus' Dinamo Minsk (blue)

BELARUS

Premier League

April 9, 2015 to November 7, 2015

ESTONIA

Meistriliiga

March 6, 2015 to November 7, 2015

FAROE ISLANDS

Premier League

February 28, 2015 to October 2, 2015

FINLAND

Veikkausliiga

April 12, 2015 to October 25, 2015

ICELAND

Úrvalsdeild

May 3, 2015 to October 3, 2015

KAZAKHSTAN

Premier League

March 2015 to November 2015



Swedish start...Anton Saletros of AIFK

LATVIA

Higher League

Starts March 2015

(finish date not yet known)

LITHUANIA

A Lyga

March 2015 to November 2015

NORWAY

Eliteserien

April 6, 2015 to November 8, 2015

SWEDEN

Allsvenskan

April 5, 2015 to October 31, 2015

 SIERRA LEONE

STEVE MENARY



Beating Ebola

National side to play again after health crisis

Just as football in Sierra Leone appeared to be edging towards normality, the game in the Ebola-hit West African nation has been plunged back into further uncertainty.

In the face of a medical disaster, the game had ground to a halt, but the crisis is easing. In January, Pujehun District was given the all clear after 42 days without a recorded Ebola case and March will see the national team play its first game for four months.

However, the international friendly threatened to be overshadowed by a destructive internal row at the Sierra Leone Football Association (SLFA).

Unable to meet in person, rebel members formed an interim body to run the game in the country until elections in June. When the interim body was recognised by the country's sports ministry, this not only put the position of SLFA president Isha Johansen – who was elected in 2013 and is one of the few women running a national association – in danger, it also threatened the game as a whole in Sierra Leone.

Governmental interference usually leads to an automatic FIFA suspension. But, feigning ignorance as a reason for inaction, the world game's governing body claimed that it hadn't been "officially informed of the ministry initiative".

Sierra Leone's president, Ernest Bai Koroma, was far more decisive and he dragged both factions to the negotiating table at State House and thrashed out a deal. Johansen will stay in place until a congress brought forward to April. Until then, Sierra Leone's National Olympic Committee president, Patrick Coker, will be a "moral guarantor" of SLFA funds.

For Sierra Leone's home-based players, avoiding infection has been a priority, while money has been scarce. Crowds for club games rarely top 1,000 and therefore wages are low. Players get US\$100 a month at best, but then only when matches are staged – and the National League has yet to resume after a scheduled break last June.

Some clubs like FC Johansen – founded by the SLFA president – and Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces still paid full salaries, while others made what the SLFA described as "a form of humanitarian assistance".

As the Ebola outbreak escalated last summer, CAF banned Sierra Leone from playing at home and the forthcoming friendly international will be played in East Africa, probably against Tanzania.

Whatever the result, the match will surely be an

"The talent is there...there's nine or 10 players in English Premier League academies and others in Holland and Germany that are eligible"

Former national coach
Johnny McKinstry

improvement on the last fixture. Sierra Leone played all their African Nations Cup qualifiers away and their final game was a 3-1 defeat by DR Congo in Lubumbashi, where they were subjected to the crowd chanting "Ebola" throughout the match.

Since then, the SLFA has been tearing itself apart. Johnny McKinstry, the team's Northern Irish coach, has departed, although he still sees a bright future.

"The talent is there," says McKinstry. "There's a lot of young players of 17 or 18, who left due to the civil war. There's nine or 10 players in English Premier League academies and others in Holland and Germany that are eligible. I spoke to a number of them before I left."

McKinstry says his team were dogged by poor





administration and as an example cites the 47 hours spent in transit as the team flew from Ivory Coast to DR Congo via Casablanca for one qualifier.

McKinstry sought to lower the team's average age, but veteran midfielder Julius Wobay, who plays for Neftchi Baku in Azerbaijan, is still committed to the cause and hopes for a recall. However, he will not return home until at least June – and then only if they play their first 2018 World Cup qualifiers in Freetown.

"We are hoping for the best," says Wobay, whose family live in the UK. "Normally we have a game in June and we hope this Ebola outbreak will be over by then. But it's really tough for us because we face so many crises back home." **WS**

► Willems' 29-second red card is rescinded after referee Kevin Blom admits he had shown it in error.

ITALY: Milan unveil plans to leave the San Siro and build a new 48,000-seat stadium. Holders Napoli beat Internazionale 1-0 to secure a place in the Italian Cup semi-finals.

GERMANY: Bottom-of-the-league Borussia Dortmund lose again, 1-0 at home to 10-man Augsburg.

SPAIN: Real Madrid beat Sevilla 2-1 but James Rodriguez, who opens the scoring, fractures a metatarsal in his right foot and is out for two months.

Thursday Feb 5

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Crowd trouble holds up the semi-final between Ghana and Equatorial Guinea for 35 minutes. Ghana supporters are forced to take refuge on the pitch in the 83rd minute as their team win 3-0.

ARGENTINA: Estudiantes lose 1-0 to Ecuador's Independiente del Valle in the away leg of their Libertadores qualifying game.

HOLLAND: Ajax lose their second Eredivisie game in four days as AZ win 1-0 in Amsterdam.

Friday Feb 6

ARGENTINA: A Carlos Sanchez header gives River Plate a 1-0 lead in the first leg of the Recopa Sudamericana against San Lorenzo.

FRANCE: Saint-Etienne throw away a two-goal lead and then have to grab a late equaliser to earn a 3-3 draw at home to relegation battlers Lens.

GERMANY: Schalke beat Borussia Monchengladbach 1-0 and replace them in third spot in the Bundesliga.

ITALY: Just two months after being bought by a Russian-Cypriot consortium, Parma are sold again.

MOROCCO: After pulling out as hosts of this year's African Nations Cup over fears of the Ebola virus, Morocco are banned from the next two tournaments, in 2017 and 2019, and fined US\$1m by CAF.

Saturday Feb 7

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: DR Congo beat Equatorial Guinea on penalties to take third place at the tournament.

ARGENTINA: A 2-1 victory over Uruguay secures the South American Youth Championship for Argentina's under-20 side and a place at the 2016 Olympics. Both sides qualify for

Solid...Crul Azul (in blue) keep another clean sheet, this time against Monterrey



this year's Under-20 World Cup, along with Brazil and Colombia.

AUSTRALIA: Melbourne Victory beat Melbourne City 3-0 and go one point behind leaders Perth Glory, who lose 3-1 at home to Sydney.

ENGLAND: Tottenham Hotspur beat Arsenal 2-1 in the north London derby, while Everton and Liverpool draw 0-0.

GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund move off the foot of the table with a 3-0 win at Freiburg. They are replaced by Stuttgart, who lose 2-0 to Bayern Munich – the Bundesliga leaders' first win of the year.

MEXICO: Cruz Azul beat Monterrey 1-0 to top the table and become the first team to keep a clean sheet in all five of their opening Liga MX games.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: Western United win 6-0 away to Koloale to clinch the national title.

SOUTH KOREA: A goalless draw with hosts Thailand secures victory for South Korea's under-23 side in the 43rd edition of the King's Cup.

SPAIN: Atletico Madrid thrash city rivals Real 4-0.

Sunday Feb 8

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: Ivory Coast beat Ghana 9-8 on penalties in the Final after a goalless draw.

FRANCE: Zlatan Ibrahimovic scores a late penalty to snatch a 1-1 draw for Paris Saint-Germain at league leaders Lyon.

PORTUGAL: Jardel scores on the stroke of full time as Benfica draw 1-1

at Lisbon rivals Sporting.

Monday Feb 9

ITALY: Lazio miss the chance to go fourth in Serie A, losing 1-0 at home to Genoa.

SPAIN: Elche move off the bottom of the table with a 2-0 victory at home to Rayo Vallecano.

Tuesday Feb 10

ENGLAND: Mario Balotelli scores his first league goal for Liverpool in a 3-2 win against Tottenham Hotspur. QPR finally win away in the league, triumphing 2-0 at Sunderland.

GERMANY: Marco Reus extends his contract with Borussia Dortmund until June 2019.

Wednesday Feb 11

ALGERIA: JS Kabylie's two-year African Champions League ban, which was imposed after their

► Cameroonian striker Albert Ebosse suffered fatal head injuries at the end of a home league game in August last year, is lifted on appeal.

ARGENTINA: River Plate beat San Lorenzo 1-0 to win the Recopa Sudamericana 2-0 on aggregate.

FRANCE: An injury-time equaliser saves Guingamp's blushes against fourth-tier Yzeure in the French Cup before the Ligue 1 side win 3-1 in extra-time.

Thursday Feb 12

BELGIUM: Anderlecht win 3-0 to beat Gent 5-0 on aggregate and will now face Club Brugge in the Belgian Cup Final.

FRANCE: Didier Deschamps extends

his contract to coach the national side through to the 2018 World Cup.

URUGUAY: Three-times Libertadores Cup winners Nacional miss out on the group stage for the first time in 19 years after losing to Palestino of Chile on away goals in the qualifiers.

Friday Feb 13

ARGENTINA: Defending champions Racing kick off the new season with a 1-0 loss at home to Rosario Central.

FRANCE: David Ngog's injury-time equaliser earns Reims a 2-2 draw at Marseille and denies the hosts top spot in Ligue 1.

GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund complete back-to-back Bundesliga wins for only the second time this



Missing out...Nacional (in white)

season, beating Mainz 4-2.

MOROCCO: Raja Casablanca begin the CAF Champions League with a 4-0 first-leg win in the preliminary round against Diablos Noirs of Congo.

SAUDI ARABIA: Al Hilal lose 2-1 to Al Ahli in the Crown Prince Cup Final.

UAE: Al Ain go joint-top of the table, level on points with Al Jazira, with a 7-1 thrashing of Ajman.

Saturday Feb 14

CHINA: Shandong Luneng claim the Chinese Super Cup, beating league champions Guangzhou Evergrande on penalties.

FRANCE: Leading 2-0 with two minutes to play, but down to nine players because of injuries, Paris

Japan

MIKE PLASTOW



J.League season is split in two

Campaign to finish with play-offs and Championship Final

This season's J.League reverts to a two-stage tournament, although it will not exactly replicate the previous format, which was halted in 2004. The question of whether two stages are better than one divides opinion in Japan. Proponents see the season-ending play-offs as a crowd pleaser in the style of baseball's Japan Series. Opponents, meanwhile, dislike the fact that the strongest team over the season might not win, or may not even make the play-offs – which happened to Kashiwa Reysol, the team with the most points over the entire season, in 2000.

The Kashiwa experience won't happen this time as the team with the most points overall will go straight to the Final, where they will meet the winners of the play-offs between the two stage winners and the teams with the third and fourth highest number of points over the campaign. This is all going to be complicated to grasp until the last moment – with the inevitable overlap between the teams and resulting byes – but is sure to guarantee plenty of excitement as the regular season draws to a close.

Only teams that are relegated – to be decided by the total points over the season – will be disqualified from taking part in the championship play-off. With three teams going down, that could mean the team that ends 15th in the 18-team table could still end up as champions.

None of this should faze defending champions Gamba Osaka, who in effect played last season in two stages anyway. Languishing in the relegation zone until

nearly halfway through the season, the promoted Gamba produced an incredible surge from the summer onwards and went on to win the J.League, the J.League Cup and the Emperor's Cup.

Coach Kenta Hasegawa has understandably made few changes to his squad, with J.League Player of the Year Yasuhiro Endo expected to again be the team's linchpin. Gamba have acquired Vegalta Sendai striker

“Winner-takes-all games are easier for non-hardcore viewers to understand”

Daisuke Nakanishi, J.League director of competitions

Shingo Akamine and midfielder Shohei Ogura from Yokohama F Marinos – who is a wise signing with Endo and Tomokazu Myojin now 35 and 37 respectively.

There are no new big-name arrivals to match that of Diego Forlan's signing by Cerezo Osaka last year, and the fact the Uruguayan striker struggled to contribute as his team went down may well have put a damper on the enthusiasm for big foreign acquisitions.

The most intriguing overseas arrival is French coach Erick Mombaerts, who has taken charge of Yokohama F Marinos. The former boss of his country's under-18 and under-21 sides, Mombaerts inherits a team of veterans – although Shunsuke Nakamura will miss the opening couple of months with an ankle injury – and will look to improve on last season's mid-table finish.

Last year's runners-up Urawa Red Diamonds led for

PREVIEW



Saint-Germain collapse and draw 2-2 with Caen.

GERMANY: Bayern Munich thrash Hamburg 8-0 but there are even more goals at Bayer Leverkusen, where Wolfsburg surrender a 3-0 lead but come back to win 5-4 in stoppage time with Bas Dost's fourth goal of the game.

URUGUAY: Penarol beat Cerro 3-0 in a game that is suspended following clashes between supporters and police in the opening round of matches in the clausura.

Sunday Feb 15

ENGLAND: Third-tier Bradford City, who overcame Chelsea in the previous round, beat Premier League

opposition again, winning 2-0 at home to Sunderland to reach the FA Cup quarter-finals.

FRANCE: League leaders Lyon join title challengers Paris Saint-Germain and Marseille in dropping points over the weekend with a 1-1 draw at Lorient.

GREECE: Top of the table in the first half of the season, PAOK slip 11 points behind Olympiakos following a shock 4-0 loss at Atromitos.

ITALY: Arturo Vidal misses a late penalty as Juventus are held to a 2-2 draw by strugglers Cesena.

PORTUGAL: Benfica beat Vitoria Setubal 3-0 to go four points clear at the top of the table – four days after they beat the same side by the



Hat-trick hero...Messi, with Marc Bartra

same score to reach the Portuguese League Cup Final.

SPAIN: Lionel Messi scores a hat-trick on his 300th La Liga appearance as Barcelona beat Levante 5-0. It is the Argentinian's 23rd league treble, putting him level with record holder Cristiano Ronaldo.

Monday Feb 16

ITALY: *The Bangkok Post* reports that Thai businessman Bee Taechaubol has offered €1bn for a controlling stake in Milan.

RUSSIA: Fabio Capello will be sacked if Russia fail to qualify for Euro 2016. Football Union president Nikolai Tolstykh says failure "will be seen as a breach of his contract".



KEY DATES

TWO-STAGE SEASON STARTS

March 7, 2015

TWO-STAGE SEASON ENDS

November 22, 2015

CHAMPIONSHIP

PLAY-OFFS AND FINAL

(dates yet to be confirmed)

Treble...Gamba Osaka won the J.League, the J.League Cup and the Emperor's Cup last season

60 per cent of the season only to run out of steam. It is nine years since Japan's best-supported side won their only championship and their problems up front last season – when Shinzo Koroki was injured – could be solved by the signing of Slovenian Zlatan Ljubijankic from relegated cross-town rivals Omiya Arjia. They have also brought in Wataru Hashimoto from Kashiwa Reysol and Naoki Ishihara from Sanfrecce Hiroshima.

Sanfrecce, champions in 2012 and 2013, slipped into mid-table last season but have added Brazilian striker Douglas, who played for Kyoto Sanga last term, on loan.

Kashima Antlers, the seven-times champions, haven't won major silverware since the J.League Cup in 2012, but Toninho Cerezo returned for a second stint as coach last season and kept them in the title race until the final day. South Korea defender Hwang Seok-ho from Sanfrecce is a useful addition, while Gaku Shibasaki and Gen Shoji are coming through in the national team, and Brazilian Caio was the J.League's best young player last year. **WS**

2015 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

The J.League's four representatives in this year's continental competition – Gamba Osaka, Kashima Antlers, Kashiwa Reysol and Urawa Red Diamonds – will be hoping to do better than last year's Japanese entrants, none of whom managed to go beyond the first knockout round.

Western Sydney Wanderers of

Australia start their defence of the title in Group H, alongside Kashima, but they have struggled since last year's triumph. After beating Al Hilal of Saudia Arabia 1-0 on aggregate in the Final, they lost both of their games at December's Club World Cup and went 13 games before getting their first win in this term's domestic A-League.

KEY DATES

Group games

Feb 24/25, Mar 3/4,
Mar 17/18, Apr 7/8,
Apr 21/22, May 5/6

Round of 16

May 19/20
& May 26/27

Quarter-finals

Aug 25/26
& Sep 15/16

Semi-finals

Sep 29/30
& Oct 20/21

Final

Nov 7 & 21



Holders...Western Sydney Wanderers (in red and black)



PAUL GARDNER



The global appeal of MLS

New stars arrive from England, Italy, Spain and Brazil

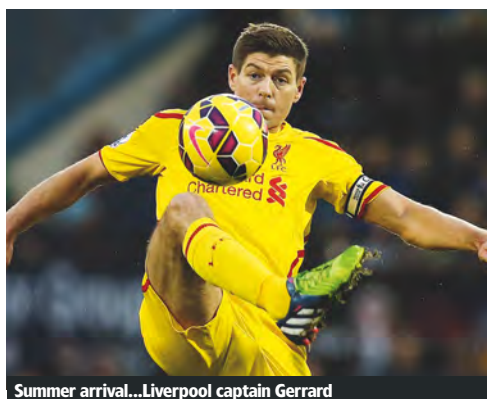
Despite the farewells of several of its most prominent stars, there is much for Major League

Soccer followers to look forward to in the competition's 20th season.

Landon Donovan, Thierry Henry and Tim Cahill may no longer be around, but MLS clubs have been busy during the off season, putting an impressive list of newcomers in place. And that, as much as anything, emphasises the global reach of MLS: with Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard from England, Sebastian Giovinco from Italy, David Villa from Spain and Kaka from Brazil.

While these superstar arrivals are a diverse group in terms of their countries of birth, they do have one thing in common: they are all attacking, goal-scoring players. And that is something that faithfully reflects the intentions of MLS when it started the Designated Player scheme, in 2007, to bring in crowd-pleasing, creative players. As MLS commissioner Don Garber says: "I wouldn't expect our teams to be signing goalkeepers as DPs."

For a while, Gerrard may be viewed by some as a replacement for Donovan at Los Angeles Galaxy,



Summer arrival...Liverpool captain Gerrard

but that notion won't last. The former Liverpool and England midfielder will make his own mark at the club, where he has Robbie Keane – 54 goals in 84 game since joining in 2011 – to show him the way to MLS success.

The duo won't, however, link up until July – as is the case with Lampard, whose late arrival has already caused quite a rumpus in the US, where fans of the newly created New York City had expected him to be with the club from the start of the season. They complained, with considerable justification, that the club had put out misleading information.

It hasn't been easy for ➤

Key dates

SEASON STARTS

March 7, 2015

SEASON ENDS

October 25, 2015

MLS CUP FINAL

December 2015

Superstar...Kaka

Preview



Eastern Conference

CHICAGO FIRE

Arrivals:

Adailton, David Accam, Kennedy Igboananike, Shaun Maloney

Departures:

Robert Earnshaw, Benji Joya, Logan Pause, Gonzalo Segares, Florent Sinama-Pongolle

COLUMBUS CREW

Arrivals:

Kei Kamara, Cedric Mabwati, Bernardo Anor, Jairo Arrieta

DC UNITED

Arrivals:

Jairo Arrieta, Jeff Parke

MONTREAL IMPACT

Arrivals:

Dominic Oduro, Nigel Reo-Coker, Bakary Soumare

Departures:

Mamadou Danso, Felipe Martins, Heath Pearce, Troy Perkins

NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION

Arrivals:

Juan Agudelo, Tristan Bowen

Departures:

Andre Akpan, Shalrie Joseph, Patrick Mullins

NEW YORK CITY

Arrivals:

Mehdi Ballouchy, Mix Diskerud, Ned Grabavoy, Jason Hernandez, George John, Frank Lampard, Patrick Mullins, Chris Wingert, Sebastian Velasquez, David Villa

NEW YORK RED BULLS

Arrivals:

Sacha Kijestjan, Felipe Martins, Sal Zizzo

Departures:

Eric Alexander, Tim Cahill, Richard Eckersley, Thierry Henry, Jamison Olave

ORLANDO CITY

Arrivals:

Aurelien Collin,

Estrela,

Cristian Higuaita, Kaka, Danny Mwanga, Amobi Okugo, Rafael Ramos, Donovan Ricketts, Carlos Rivas, Bryan Rochez, Brek Shea

PHILADELPHIA UNION

Arrivals:

CJ Sapong, Steven Vitoria

Departures:

Zac Math, Amobi Okugo, Carlos Valdes

TORONTO

Arrivals:

Jozy Altidore, Robbie Findley, Sebastian Giovinco

Departures:

Jermaine Defoe, Dwayne DeRosario, Dominic Oduro



Western Conference

COLORADO RAPIDS

Arrivals:
Michael Harrington,
Zac McMath,
Marcelo Sarvas

Departures:
Edson Buddle,
Nick LaBrocca,
Brian Mullen,
Danny Mwanga,
Marvell Wynne

DALLAS

Arrivals:
Kyle Bekker,
Atiba Harris,

Dan Kennedy

Departures:
Andres Escobar,
George John,
Adam Moffat

HOUSTON DYNAMO

Arrivals:
Leonel Miranda,
Nathan Sturgis,
Erick Torres
Departures:
Omar Cummings,
Andrew Driver,
Tally Hall

LOS ANGELES GALAXY

Arrivals:
Steven Gerrard
Departures:
Landon Donovan,
James Riley,
Marcelo Sarvas

PORTLAND TIMBERS

Arrivals:
Dalron Asprilla,
Nat Borchers,
Adam Larsen
Departures:
Michael Harrington,

Danny O'Rourke,
Donovan Ricketts,
Steve Zakuani

REAL SALT LAKE

Arrivals:
Jamison Olave
Departures:
Nat Borchers,
Robbie Findley,
Ned Grabavoy,
Chris Wingert

SAN JOSE EARTHQUAKES

Arrivals:
Leandro Barrera,
Marvell Wynne
Departures:
Jon Busch,
Atiba Harris,
Jason Hernandez

SEATTLE SOUNDERS

Arrivals:
Troy Perkins.
Departures:
Jalil Anibaba,
Djimi Traore,
DeAndre Yedlin

SPORTING KANSAS CITY

Arrivals:
Jalil Anibaba,
Bernardo Anor,
Roger Espinoza
Departures:
Aurelien Collin,

CJ Sapong,
Sal Zizzo

VANCOUVER WHITECAPS

Arrivals:
Octavio Rivero,
Diego Rodriguez
Departures:
Mehdi Ballouchy,
Jay DeMerit,
Andy O'Brien

► NYCFC. Despite all the rousing words about building a new stadium, there is still no sign of one, not even a site for one. The club will therefore play its first two seasons in the New York Yankees' baseball stadium.

NYCFC's coach Jason Kreis – an American who had an 11-year playing career in MLS – arrives after seven successful years as coach of Real Salt Lake, where he won the MLS championship in 2009 and consistently fielded a team that played eye-catching, attacking soccer. He has promised more of the same in New York.

As a possible partner up front for David Villa, Kreis has signed Patrick Mullins. Only a year out of college, Mullins is an interesting choice. Relying more on skill and subtlety rather than strength and speed, Mullins is not a typical college player, for whom it has proved very difficult – especially forwards – to make an impression in MLS.

The arrival of the 5ft 5in Giovinco, dubbed “the atomic ant”, in Toronto represents yet another try by the Canadian club to build a winning team. The Italian comes in as the league's highest-paid player, at \$7million – which did nothing to ease the salary-inequality in the club dressing room.

With Jermaine Defoe having left, Giovinco's signing could be seen as part of a much-delayed change of direction by the club, away from Brit coaches and players, and his first task is to be part of the first Toronto team to qualify for the post-season

Big money...
Giovinco



play-offs since joining MLS in 2007.

Orlando City's entry into MLS sees top-flight soccer return to the state of Florida, which had two teams – Miami Fusion and Tampa Bay Mutiny – in the early days, before both folded in 2001. The presence of Kaka at Orlando gives MLS its first world-famous Brazilian. Yet, despite the conventional wisdom that the fans in Florida are predominantly Hispanic, there are few Latino players in the squad. And the coach is English – the former Stoke City and Everton striker Adrian Heath.

Along with the two new sides there is also a new stadium, with the opening of the 18,000-seat, soccer-specific Avaya Stadium which will be the home of San Jose Earthquakes.

One cause for concern as the big

“We are ready to strike”

Toronto's Michael Bradley may be one of MLS' highest earners, but he fully supports the player union

kick off approaches is, will the season begin on time?

At the same time Garber was praising his league and its new players, he was also involved in negotiations with the players' union, trying to work out a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

With MLS raking in big money from the franchise fees (between \$70-\$100million), impressive sponsorship deals and a new TV

contract, players feel that the money should be spread more evenly in a league where the average salary is \$226,000 – considerably less than the \$6.5m that Toronto's Michael Bradley earns. And yet it is Bradley who is one of the loudest voices calling for a fairer distribution of wages. If the negotiations didn't go well, he let it be known that “we are ready to strike”.

Beyond the CBA talks and this year's competition, there is no shortage of talking points and new franchise activity.

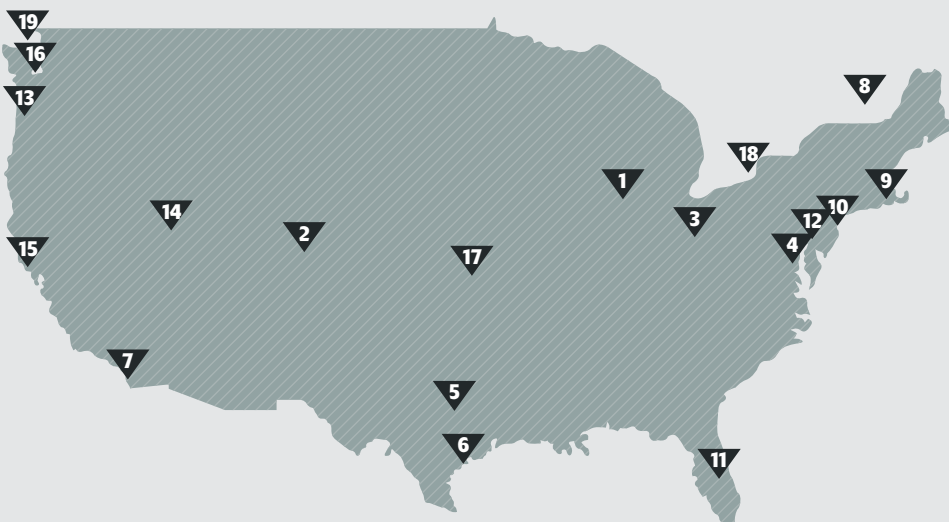
Rather puzzling is the situation of Miami, which was chosen by David Beckham and his group for their team. Beckham created considerable excitement in February 2014 when he announced that his as yet un-named team would play in downtown Miami. He produced elaborate plans for the building of a stadium, but local businesses raised objections. An alternative site was found nearby, but that too was nixed – this time it was local residents who objected.

Garber then said that if Beckham couldn't find a downtown site for his stadium, he wouldn't be getting a franchise. This seemed almost vindictive. After all, New York City had got its franchise without either a stadium or a site.

Another non-active franchise is in Los Angeles. The original franchise, Chivas-USA, operated between 2007 and 2013, when it was sold back to the league. MLS operated the team last season while it searched for new investors, but at the end of 2014 Chivas-USA folded with the announcement that it would resume play in 2017 under a new name, with a new ownership group (Vincent Tan is one of the partners) and a new stadium. **WS**

MLS 2015

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Chicago Fire | 7 Los Angeles Galaxy | 12 Philadelphia Union |
| 2 Colorado Rapids | 8 Montreal Impact | 13 Portland Timbers |
| 3 Columbus Crew | 9 New England Revolution | 14 Real Salt Lake |
| 4 DC United | 10 New York City | 15 San Jose Earthquakes |
| 5 Dallas | New York Red Bulls | 16 Seattle Sounders |
| 6 Houston Dynamo | 11 Orlando City | 17 Sporting Kansas City |
| | | 18 Toronto |
| | | 19 Vancouver Whitecaps |



Internationals

ASIAN CUP FINALS

Played in Australia

Group A

Jan 9 - Melbourne

Australia 4 (Cahill 33, Luongo 44, Jedinak 62, Troisi 90+2)

Kuwait 1 (Fadhel 8)

HT: 2-1. **Att:** 25,231. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)

Australia: Ryan - Franjic, Sainsbury, Spiranovic, Behich, Luongo (Bresciano 85), Jedinak, Troisi, Leckie, Cahill (Juric 65), Kruse (Burns 72).

Kuwait: Youssef - Al Hajri, Fadhel (Al Matoug 57), Neda, Al Qahtani (Al Mutawa 75), Maqseed, Al Sheikh, Al Ibrahim, S Al Enezi, Zaid, Mashaan (Nasser 63).

Jan 10 - Canberra

South Korea 1 (Cho Young-cheol 45+1)

Oman 0

HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,552. **Ref:** O'Leary (NZ)

South Korea: Kim Jin-hyeon - Kim Chang-soo (Cha Du-ri 19), Kim Ju-young, Jang Hyun-soo, Kim Jin-su, Park Joo-ho, Ki Sung-yueng, Lee Chung-yong (Han Kyo-won 78), Koo Ja-cheol, Son Heung-min, Cho Young-cheol (Lee Jeong-hyeop 72). **Oman:** Al Habsi - Saleh, Abdul Al Mukhaini, Al Owaisi (Al Khaldi 73), Al Musalami, Al Busaidi, Al Siyabi (Al Ruzaiqi 86), Mubarak, Al Farsi, Q Said (Al Hosni 61), Al Muqbali.

Jan 13 - Canberra

Kuwait 0

South Korea 1 (Nam Tae-hee 36)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,795. **Ref:** Faghani (Irn)

Kuwait: Youssef - Al Matoug, Hajri, Neda, Awadh, Al Buraiki (Zaid 75), Al Ibrahim, S Al Enezi (Al Mutawa 64), Maqseed, Mashaan, Nasser (F Al Enezi 76).

South Korea: Kim Seung-gyu - Cha Du-ri, Jang Hyun-soo, Kim Young-gwon, Kim Jin-su, Lee Myung-joo (Cho Young-cheol 46), Ki Sung-yueng, Park Joo-ho, Nam Tae-hee (Han Kook-young 86), Lee Keun-ho, Kim Min-woo (Lee Jeong-hyeop 76).

Jan 13 - Sydney

Oman 0

Australia 4 (McKay 27, Kruse 30, Milligan 45+3, Juric 70)

HT: 0-3. **Att:** 50,276. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)

Oman: Al Habsi - Saleh (Al Nahar 88), Abdul Al Mukhaini, Al Owaisi, Al Musalami, Al Busaidi (A Said 46), Mubarak, Al Farsi, Al Khaldi, Al Muqbali, Al Hosni (Al Jabri 46).

Australia: Ryan - Franjic, Sainsbury, Spiranovic, Davidson, Luongo (Bresciano 51), Milligan, McKay, Leckie (Oar 77), Cahill (Juric 51), Kruse.

Jan 17 - Brisbane

Australia 0

South Korea 1 (Lee Jeong-hyeop 32)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 48,513. **Ref:** Shukralla (Bhn)

Australia: Ryan - Franjic, Sainsbury, Spiranovic, Behich, Luongo, Milligan, McKay (Cahill 71), Burns (Kruse 71), Juric, Troisi (Leckie 60).

South Korea: Kim Jin-hyeon - Kim Chang-soo, Kwak Tae-hwi, Kim Young-gwon, Kim Jin-su, Park Joo-ho (Han Kook-young 41), Ki Sung-yueng, Han Kyo-won (Jang Hyun-soo 76), Koo Ja-cheol (Son Heung-min 49), Lee Keun-ho, Lee Jeong-hyeop.

Jan 17 - Newcastle

Oman 1 (Al Muqbali 69)

Kuwait 0

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,495. **Ref:** Al Mirdasi (Sau)

Oman: Al Habsi - Al Nahar, Abdul Al Mukhaini, Al Owaisi, Al Busaidi, Mubarak, Al Farsi, Saleh (Al Shimili 90+2), Al Ruzaiqi (Al Siyabi 58), Q Said (Al Jabri 82), Al Muqbali.

Kuwait: Abdulghafour - Al Matoug, Al Hajri, Neda, Awadh, Al Buraiki, Al Ibrahim (Al Amer 74), Maqseed, Zaid (Al Mutawa 68), Mashaan (F Al Enezi 74), Nasser.

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea (Q)	3	3	0	0	3	0	9
Australia (Q)	3	2	0	1	8	2	6
Oman	3	1	0	2	1	5	3
Kuwait	3	0	0	3	1	6	0

Group B

Jan 10 - Sydney

Uzbekistan 1 (Sergeev 62)

North Korea 0

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,078. **Ref:** Shukralla (Bhn)

Uzbekistan: Nesterov - Shorakhmedov, Mullajanov, Ismailov, Denisov, Kapadze, Haydarov, Tursunov (Iskanderov 90+4), Ahmedov (Rashidov 72), Djeparov, Sergeev (Nasimov 89).

North Korea: Ri Myong-guk - Cha Jong-hyok, Jang Kuk-chol, Jang Song-hyok, Jon Kwang-ik, Pak Song-chol, Ri Yong-jik, So Hyon-uk (Om Chol-song 65), Jong Il-gwan, Ryang Yong-gi, Pak Kwang-ryong.

Jan 10 - Brisbane

Saudi Arabia 0

China 1 (Yu Hai 81)

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,557. **Ref:** Faghani (Irn)

Saudi Arabia: Abdullah - Al Mowalad (Al Shehri 90), Osama Hawsawi, Omar Hawsawi, Al Shahrani, Kariri, Al Bassas (Al Sahlawi 84), Al Dawasri, Al Abed, Al Faraj, Hazazi.

China: Wang Dalei - Zhang Chengdong (Yu Hanchao 70), Zhang Linteng, Ren Hang, Mei Fang (Jiang Zhipeng 79), Wu Xi, Zheng Zhi, Ji Xiang, Wu Lei, Hao Junmin (Yang Xu 70), Yu Hai.

Jan 14 - Melbourne

North Korea 1 (Ryang Yong-gi 11)

Saudi Arabia 4 (Hazazi 37, Al Sahlawi 52, 54, Al Abed 77)

HT: 1-1. **Att:** 12,349. **Ref:** Al Hilali (Oma)

North Korea: Ri Myong-guk - Cha Jong-hyok (Ro Hak-su 61), Jang Kuk-chol, Jang Song-hyok, Jon Kwang-ik, Pak Song-chol (O Hyok-chol 56), Ri Yong-jik, Ryang Yong-gi (Choe Won 90+1), Jong Il-gwan, Pak Kwang-ryong, Sim Hyon-jin.

Sent off: Ri Yong-jik 76.

Saudi Arabia: Abdullah - Fallatah, Osama Hawsawi, Omar Hawsawi, Al Zori, Al Dawasri, Kariri (Ghaleb 82), Al Faraj, Al Sahlawi (Al Jassam 75), Hazazi, Al Abed (Al Muwallad 83).

Jan 14 - Brisbane

China 2 (Wu Xi 55, Sun Ke 68)

Uzbekistan 1 (Ahmedov 22)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 13,674. **Ref:** M A H Mohamed (UAE)

China: Wang Dalei - Zhang Chengdong (Liu Binbin 81), Mei Fang, Zhang Linteng, Ren Hang, Jiang Zhipeng, Wu Lei, Wu Xi, Zheng Zhi, Yu Hai (Hao Junmin 46), Gao Lin (Sun Ke 66).

Uzbekistan: Nesterov - Shorakhmedov, Mullajanov (Tuktakhodjaev 46), Ismailov, Denisov, Haydarov, Kapadze, Tursunov (Hasanov 71), Ahmedov, Djeparov (Rashidov 62), Sergeev.

Jan 18 - Melbourne

Uzbekistan 3 (Rashidov 27, 79, Shodiev 71)

Saudi Arabia 1 (Al Sahlawi 60)

HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,871. **Ref:** Williams (Aus)

Uzbekistan: Nesterov - Mukhammediyev (Shorakhmedov 87), Mullajanov, Ismailov, Denisov, Haydarov, Ahmedov, Rashidov (Tursunov 90), Iskanderov (Shodiev 66), Hasanov, Nasimov.

Saudi Arabia: Abdullah - Al Shahrani, Osama Hawsawi, Omar Hawsawi, Al Zori (Al Shehri 84), Al Dawasri, Kariri (Al Jassam 75), Al Faraj, Al Sahlawi, Hazazi, Al Abed (Al Muwallad 90+2).

Jan 18 - Canberra

China 2 (Sun Ke 1, 42)

North Korea 1 (Gao Lin og 56)

HT: 2-0. **Att:** 18,457. **Ref:** A M Hussain (Qat)

China: Wang Dalei - Zhang Chengdong, Zhang Linteng (Li Ang 82), Mei Fang, Jiang Zhipeng, Cai Huikang, Zheng Zhi (Yu Hanchao 53), Sun Ke (Wu Xi 70), Hao Junmin, Yu Hai, Gao Lin.

North Korea: Ri Myong-guk - Ro Hak-su, Jang Kuk-chol, Jang Song-hyok, Jon Kwang-ik, Pak Song-chol (Han Song-hyok 35), Ryang Yong-gi, Jong Il-gwan, O Hyok-chol (Choe Won 80), Sim Hyon-jin, Pak Kwang-ryong (So Hyon-uk 71).

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
China (Q)	3	3	0	0	5	2	9
Uzbekistan (Q)	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Saudi Arabia	3	1	0	2	5	3	3
North Korea	3	0	0	3	2	7	0

Group C

Jan 11 - Canberra

United Arab Emirates 4 (Khalil 37, 52, Mabkhout 56, 89)

Qatar 1 (Ibrahim 22)

HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,513. **Ref:** Kim Jong-hyeok (SKO)

UAE: Naser - Sanqour, Al Kamali, Salem, Abbas, Esmaeel, A Abdulrahman (Hassan 69), O Abdulrahman, Mabkhout, M Abdulrahman (Al Hammadi 69), Khalil (Al Fardan 85).

Qatar: Burhan - Mohammed Abdullah, Mukhtar, Majid, Hassan, El Sayed, Al Haidos, Boudiaf (Khokhi 46), Hatem, Ibrahim (I Mohammad 63), Muntari (Meshal Abdullah 69).

Jan 11 - Melbourne

Iran 2 (Hajsaifi 45+2, Shojaei 71)

Bahrain 0

HT: 1-0. **Att:** 17,712. **Ref:** Williams (Aus)

Iran: Haghighi - Ghafouri, Hosseini, Pouraliganji, Pooladi, Teymourian, Nekounam, Dejagah (Rafiei 89), Shojaei (Jahanbakhsh 80), Hajsaifi, Ghoochannejhad (Azmoon 75).

Bahrain: S M Jaffar - Omar, Husain, Al Hayam (Al Hooti 65), Al Husaini (S A Jaffar 80), Aaish, Al Safi, Saeed, Okwunwanne, Abdul-Latif (Al Malood 66).

Jan 15 - Canberra

Bahrain 1 (Okwunwanne 26)

United Arab Emirates 2 (Mabkhout 1, Husain og 73)

HT: 1-1. **Att:** 7,925. **Ref:** Beath (Aus)

Bahrain: S M Jaffar - Omar, Duaji (Baba 67), Husain, Al Hooti, Saeed (Abdul-Latif 78), S A Jaffar, Al Safi, Aaish, Okwunwanne, Al Malood (Al Husaini 78).

UAE: Naser - Sanqour, Al Kamali (I Ahmed 81), M Ahmed, Abbas, Esmaeel, A Abdulrahman, M Abdulrahman (Al Hammadi 62), O Abdulrahman, Mabkhout, Khalil (Al Fardan 87).

Jan 15 - Sydney

Qatar 0

Iran 1 (Azmoon 52)

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 22,672. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)

Qatar: Burhan - Mohammed Abdullah, Mukhtar, Majid, Hassan, Boudiaf, El Sayed (Meshal Abdullah 73), I Mohammad (Ibrahim 60), Khokhi, Al Haidos, Muntari.

Iran: Haghighi - Ghafouri, Hosseini, Pouraliganji, Pooladi, Teymourian (Sadeghi 87), Nekounam, Dejagah, Shojaei (Heydari 72), Hajsaifi, Azmoon (Ghoochannejhad 62).

Jan 19 - Brisbane

Iran 1 (Ghoochannejhad 90+1)

United Arab Emirates 0

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,394. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)

Iran: Haghighi - Heydari (Dejagah 63), Hosseini, Pouraliganji, Pooladi, Teymourian, Nekounam, Jahanbakhsh (Ghafouri 58), Rafiei, Amir, Azmoon (Ghoochannejhad 72).

UAE: Naser - Sanqour, M Ahmed, Salem, Abbas, Esmaeel, A Abdulrahman, Mabkhout, O Abdulrahman, Al Fardan, Khalil.

Jan 19 - Sydney

Qatar 1 (Al Haidos 68)

Bahrain 2 (Saeed 35, S A Jaffar 82)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,841. **Ref:** Al Hilali (Oma)

Qatar: Burhan - Mohammed Abdullah, Mukhtar, Majid, Muftah, Boudiaf, Hatem (El Sayed 46), Al Haidos, Assadalla (Magid Mohamed 69), Khokhi (Meshal Abdullah 85), Muntari.

Bahrain: Al Doseri - Omar (Al Husaini 46),

Al Hazza, Baba, Al Hooti, Saeed, S A Jaffar, Al Safi, Al Malood (Abdu 75), Aaish, Okwunwanne (Yusuf 86).

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran (Q)	3	3	0	0	4	0	9
UAE (Q)	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Bahrain	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Qatar	3	0	0	3	2	7	0

Group D

Jan 12 - Newcastle

Japan 4 (Endo 8, Okazaki 25, Honda 44, Yoshida 49)

Palestine 0

HT: 3-0. **Att:** 17,147. **Ref:** A M Hussain (Qat)

Japan: Kawashima - Sakai, Yoshida, Morishige, Nagatomo, Hasebe, Honda, Kagawa, Endo (Muto 58), Inui (Kiyotake 46), Okazaki (Toyoda 80).

Palestine: Saleh - Al Battat, Harbi, Bahdari, Jaber, Al Amour (Abu Saleh 82), Yousef (Saleh 71), Ismail, Nu'man, Abuhabib, Eid (Salah 77).

Sent off: Harbi 73.

Jan 12 - Brisbane

Jordan 0

Iraq 1 (Kasim 77)

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,840. **Ref:** Al Mirdasi (Sau)

Jordan: Shafi - Zahran, Khattab, Bani Yaseen, Al Dmeiri, Mustafa, Bani Attiah (Al Rawashdeh 60), Elias (Deeb 87), Sariweh (Za'tara 81), Hayel, Al Saify. *Sent off: Bani Yaseen 84.*

Iraq: Hassan - Salem, Ibrahim, Shaker, Ismail, Kasim, Abdul-Amir, Kalaf, Abdul-Zahra (Rashid 90), Tariq (Meram 57), Mahmoud (Yasin 73).

Jan 16 - Melbourne

Palestine 1 (Ibbeisheh 85)

Jordan 5 (Al Rawashdeh 33, Al Dardour 35, 45+2, 75, 80)

HT: 0-3. **Att:** 10,808. **Ref:** Kim Jong-hyeok (SKO)

Palestine: Saleh - Al Battat, Bahdari, Salah, Jaber, Abu Saleh (Al Amour 56), Salhe (Yousef 83), Ismail, Ibbeisheh, Abuhabib, Nu'man (Eid 75).

Jordan: Shafi - Zahran, Khattab, Mustafa, Al Dmeiri, Elias, Al Saify, Al Rawashdeh (Sariweh 71), Mubra (Bani Attiah 54), Al Dardour (Al Dawud 85), Deeb.

Jan 16 - Brisbane

Iraq 0

Japan 1 (Honda 23)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 22,941. **Ref:** Faghani (Irn)

Iraq: Hassan - Salem, Ibrahim, Shaker, Ismail, Abdul-Amir, Kasim, Kalaf (Rashid 82), Abdul-Zahra, Adnan (Yasin 67), Mahmoud (Meram 55).

Japan: Kawashima - Sakai, Yoshida, Morishige, Nagatomo, Kagawa, Hasebe, Endo (Konno 64), Honda (Muto 89), Okazaki, Inui (Kiyotake 63).

Jan 20 - Melbourne

Japan 2 (Honda 24, Kagawa 82)

Jordan 0

HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,016. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)

Japan: Kawashima - Sakai, Yoshida, Morishige, Nagatomo, Hasebe, Honda, Endo (Shibasaki 87), Kagawa, Inui (Kiyotake 51), Okazaki (Muto 79).

Jordan: Shafi - Zahran, Khattab, Bani Yaseen, Al Dmeiri, Mustafa, Al Rawashdeh (Abu Amarah 46), Elias, Al Saify, Al Dardour (Bani Attiah 74), Deeb (Hayel 46).

Jan 20 - Canberra

Iraq 2 (Mahmoud 48, Yasin 88)

Palestine 0

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,235. **Ref:** M A H Mohammed (UAE)

Iraq: Hassan - Salem, Ibrahim, Shaker, Ismail, Abdul-Amir, Kasim, Kalaf (Adnan 46), Meram (Rashid 71), Yasin, Mahmoud (Husseini 79).

Palestine: Ali - Harbi, Salem, Bahdari, Jaber, Al Amour (Ibbeisheh 67), Yousef, Salhe, Maher, Nu'man, Eid (Abuhabib 79).

GROUP D

Iraq (Q)	3	2	0	1	3	1	0
Jordan	3	1	0	2	5	4	3
Palestine	3	0	0	3	1	11	0

Jan 23 - Canberra

Iran 3 (Azmoun 24, Pouraliganji 103, Ghoochannejhad 119)

Iraq 3 (Yasin 56, Mahmoud 93, Ismail 116)

Aet. Iraq 7-6 on pens

HT: 1-0. 90mins: 1-1. Att: 18,921. Ref: Williams (Aus)

Iran: Haghighi - Ghafouri, Hosseini, Pouraliganji, Pooladi, Teymourian, Nekounam, Dejahag (Ghoochannejhad 84), Shojaei (Amiri 46), Hajsaft, Azmoun (Jahanbakhsh 63). *Sent off: Pooladi 43.*

Iraq: Hassan - Saleem, Ibrahim, Shaker, Ismail, Abdul-Amir, Kasim, Yasin (Kalaf 105), Meram (Hussein 46), Abdul-Zahra (Adnan 65), Mahmoud.

Jan 23 - Sydney

Japan 1 (Shibasaki 81)

United Arab Emirates 1 (Mabkhout 7)

Aet. UAE 5-4 on pens

HT: 0-1. 90mins: 1-1. Att: 19,094. Ref: Faghani (Irn)

Japan: Kawashima - Sakai, Yoshida, Morishige, Nagatomo, Hasebe, Honda, Endo (Shibasaki 54), Kagawa, Inui (Muto 46), Okazaki (Toyoda 65).

UAE: Naser - Hussain (I Ahmed 76), M Ahmed, Salem, Sanqour, O Abdulrahman, A Abdulrahman (Hassan 54), Esmaeel, Al Hammadi, Mabkhout, Khalil (Al Fardan 58).

Semi-finals

Jan 26 - Sydney

South Korea 2 (Lee Jeong-hyeop 20,

Kim Young-gwon 50)

Iraq 0

HT: 1-0. Att: 36,053. Ref: Sato (Jap)

South Korea: Kim Jin-hyeon - Cha Du-ri, Kwak Tae-hwi, Kim Young-gwon, Kim Jin-su, Park Joo-ho, Ki Sung-yueng (Han Kook-young 90+3), Son Heung-min, Nam Tae-hee (Jang Hyun-soo 81), Han Kyo-won (Lee Keun-ho 46), Lee Jeong-hyeop. **Iraq:** Hassan - Saleem, Ibrahim, Shaker, Ismail, Abdul-Amir, Rashid (Kamel 64), Kalaf, Abdul-Zahra (Hussein 77), Yasin (Adnan 63), Mahmoud.

Jan 27 - Newcastle

Australia 2 (Sainsbury 3, Davidson 14)

United Arab Emirates 0

HT: 2-0. Att: 21,079. Ref: Irmatov (Uzb)

Australia: Ryan - Franjic, Sainsbury, Spiranovic, Davidson, Milligan (McKay 59), Jedinak, Luongo, Kruse (Troisi 82), Cahill (Juric 67), Leckie. **UAE:** Naser - Sanqour, M Ahmed, Saleem, Abbas (Saleh 78), Esmaeel, A Abdulrahman, O Abdulrahman, M Abdulrahman (Al Hammadi 46), Mabkhout, Khalil (Al Kathiri 66).

3rd-place match

Jan 30 - Newcastle

Iraq 2 (Saleem 28, Kalaf 42)

United Arab Emirates 3 (Khalil 16, 51, Mabkhout 57)

HT: 2-1. Att: 12,829. Ref: Shukralla (Bhn)

Iraq: Hatmeed - Saleem, Ibrahim, Shaker, Ismail, Abdul-Amir, Kasim, Kalaf (Meram 86), Kamel (Bahjat 62), Yasin (Adnan 80), Mahmoud. *Sent off: Ibrahim 55.* **UAE:** Eisa - Hussain, M Ahmed, Saleem, Sanqour (Abbas 67), Hassan, Esmaeel, Al Fardan (Al Hammadi 53), O Abdulrahman, Khalil (A Abdulrahman 76), Mabkhout.

Final

Jan 31 - Sydney

South Korea 1 (Son Heung-min 90+1)

Australia 2 (Luongo 45, Troisi 105)

Aet. HT: 0-1. 90mins: 1-1. Att: 76,385.

Ref: Faghani (Irn)

South Korea: Kim Jin-hyeon - Cha Du-ri, Kwak Tae-hwi, Kim Young-gwon, Kim Jin-su, Jang Hyun-soo, Ki Sung-yueng, Son Heung-min, Nam Tae-hee (Lee Keun-ho 64), Park Joo-ho (Han Kook-young 71), Lee Jeong-hyeop (Kim Ju-young 87).

Australia: Ryan - Franjic (McKay 75), Sainsbury, Spiranovic, Davidson, Milligan, Jedinak, Luongo, Kruse (Troisi 71), Cahill (Juric 64), Leckie.

Previous winners

1956	South Korea
1960	South Korea
1964	Israel
1968	Iran
1972	Iran
1976	Iran
1980	Kuwait
1984	Saudi Arabia
1988	Saudi Arabia
1992	Japan
1996	Saudi Arabia
2000	Japan
2004	Japan
2007	Iraq
2011	Japan

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP FINALS

Played in Equatorial Guinea

Group A

Jan 17 - Bata

Equatorial Guinea 1 (Nsue 16)

Congo 1 (Bifouma 87)

HT: 1-0. Att: 40,245. Ref: Gassama (Gam)

Equatorial Guinea: Ovono - Randy, Rui, Mbele, Sipo, Iban (Bolado 90+2), Zarandona, Kike (Belima 60), Ganet (Ellong 46), Balboa, Nsue.

Congo: Mafoumbi - Baudry, Babele, Moubhio, F N'Ganga, Gandze (N'Guessi 60), Oniangue, N'Dinga, Bouka Moutou (D Malonga 78), Bifouma, Dore (Douniama 65).

Jan 17 - Bata

Burkina Faso 0

Gabon 2 (Aubameyang 19, Evouna 72)

HT: 0-1. Att: 40,245. Ref: Seechurn (Mrs)

Burkina Faso: Sanou - Koffi, Yago, B Kone, Bambara, B Traore, Kabore, D Kone (Nakoulma 77), Zongo (Bance 66), Alain Traore, Pitroipa.

Gabon: Ovono - Palun, Ecuele Manga, Musavu-King, Obiang, Madinda (Mbingui 83), Aubameyang, Biyogo Poko, D Ndong (Kanga 63), Bulot, Evouna (Lengoulama 87).

Jan 21 - Bata

Equatorial Guinea 0

Burkina Faso 0

Att: 39,867. Ref: Alioum (Cam)

Equatorial Guinea: Ovono - Randy, Mbele, Rui, Sipo, Kike (Bolado 81), Ellong, Zarandona, Balboa (Fabiani 84), Iban (Juvenal 71), Nsue.

Burkina Faso: Sanou - Koffi, B Kone, Yago, Gouo, D Kone, Kabore, Pitroipa (Nakoulma 82), Alain Traore, B Traore, Bance.

Jan 21 - Bata

Gabon 0

Congo 1 (Oniangue 48)

HT: 0-0. Att: 34,782. Ref: Gomes (SAF)

Gabon: Ovono - Palun, Ecuele Manga, Appindangoye, Obiang, Madinda (Mbingui 84), D Ndong (Kanga 56), Bulot (Lengoulama 89), Biyogo Poko, Aubameyang, Evouna.

Congo: Mafoumbi - Baudry, Babele, Moubhio, Bissiki, Gandze (N'Guessi 74), N'Dinga, Oniangue, Bouka Moutou (F N'Ganga 87), Bifouma, Dore (C Malonga 75).

Jan 25 - Ebebiyin

Congo 2 (Bifouma 51, N'Guessi 87)

Burkina Faso 1 (Bance 86)

HT: 0-0. Att: 7,945. Ref: Lamprey (Gha)

Congo: Mafoumbi - Baudry, Babele, F N'Ganga, Bissiki, N'Dinga, Bouka Moutou, Oniangue, Litsingi (Gandze 89), Bifouma (Douniama 63), Dore (N'Guessi 75).

Burkina Faso: Sanou - Koffi, B Kone, Yago, Gouo (Bance 59), Kabore, D Kone, Alain Traore, Nakoulma (B Traore 58), Abdou Traore (Ouedraogo 73), Pitroipa.

Jan 25 - Bata

Gabon 0

Equatorial Guinea 2 (Balboa pen 55, Iban 86)

HT: 0-0. Att: 39,230. Ref: Doue (IvC)

Gabon: Ovono - Palun, Ecuele Manga, Appindangoye, Obiang (Lengoulama 83), Madinda, Kanga (Rogombe 77), Aubameyang, Biyogo Poko (D Ndong 69), Bulot, Evouna.

Equatorial Guinea: Ovono - Randy, Evuy, Rui, Sipo, Kike (Iban 68), Ellong, Zarandona, Balboa, Nsue (Ruben Dario 89), Fabiani (Juvenal 76).

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Congo (Q)	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Eq Guinea (Q)	3	1	2	0	3	1	5
Gabon	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
Burkina Faso	3	0	1	2	1	4	1

Group B

Jan 18 - Ebebiyin

Zambia 1 (Singuluma 2)

DR Congo 1 (Bolasie 66)

HT: 1-0. Att: 6,319. Ref: Grisha (Egy)

Zambia: Mweene - Mbola, Sunzu, Mtonga, Nkassu, Singuluma, Sinkala (Munthali 86), Lungu, Kampamba (Mulenga 74), Kalaba, Mayuka (Kangwa 67).

DR Congo: Kidiaba - Mpeko, Mongongu, Kimwaki, Kasusula, Mbemba, Mulumbu, Mubele (Mabwati 63), Kage (Kabananga 64), Mbokani, Bolasie.

Jan 18 - Ebebiyin

Tunisia 1 (Moncer 70)

Cape Verde 1 (Heldon pen 78)

HT: 0-0. Att: 6,479. Ref: Otogo-Castane (Gab)

Tunisia: A Mathlouthi - H Mathlouthi, Abdennour, Ben Youssef, Maaloul, Nater, Saihi (Ragued 87), Khazri (Rjaibi 82), Akaichi (Msakni 82), Moncer, Chikhaoui.

Cape Verde: Vozinha - Carlitos (Ryan Mendes 74), Gege, Fernando Varela, Stopira, Heldon, Calu, Nuno Rocha, Babanco, Djaniny (Julio Tavares 68), Kuca (Odir Fortes 84).

Jan 22 - Ebebiyin

Zambia 1 (Mayuka 59)

Tunisia 2 (Akaichi 70, Chikhaoui 89)

HT: 0-0. Att: 8,000. Ref: Bangoura (Gui)

Zambia: Mweene - Nkassu, Sunzu, Munthali, Mbola, Singuluma, Kangwa (Mulenga 88), Mtonga, Musonda, Kalaba, Mayuka (Mwanza 71).

Tunisia: A Mathlouthi - Bedoui, Abdennour, Ben Youssef, Maaloul, Saihi (Sassi 75), Chikhaoui, Ragued, Akaichi (Younes 80), Khazri (Moncer 66), Msakni.

Jan 22 - Ebebiyin

Cape Verde 0

DR Congo 0

Att: 7,680. Ref: Diedhiou (Sen)

Cape Verde: Vozinha - Carlitos, Gege, Fernando Varela, Stopira, Calu, Nuno Rocha, Babanco, Ryan Mendes (Odir Fortes 71), Julio Tavares (Platini 79), Kuca (Heldon 59).

DR Congo: Kidiaba - Mpeko, Mongongu, Kimwaki, Kasusula, Mbemba, Mabidi (Mubele 86), Mulumbu (Munganga 23), Mabwati, Bolasie (Bokila 63), Mbokani.

Jan 26 - Bata

DR Congo 1 (Bokila 66)

Tunisia 1 (Akaichi 31)

HT: 0-1. Att: 11,463. Ref: Gassama (Gam)

DR Congo: Kidiaba - Mpeko, Mongongu (Zakuani 87), Kimwaki, Kasusula, Mbemba, Mabwati (Bokila 87), Makiadi, Mubele (Kabananga 78), Mbokani, Bolasie.

Tunisia: A Mathlouthi - H Mathlouthi, Abdennour, Ben Youssef, Maaloul, Yacoubi, Sassi, Ragued (Nater 87), Khazri (Moncer 77), Akaichi (Younes 74), Chikhaoui.

Jan 26 - Ebebiyin

Cape Verde 0

Zambia 0

Att: 7,950. Ref: Alioum (Cam)

Cape Verde: Vozinha - Carlitos (Kuca 79), Gege, Fernando Varela, Stopira, Calu, Toni Varela (Odir Fortes 74), Nuno Rocha, Ryan Mendes (Djaniny 57), Garry Rodrigues, Heldon.

Zambia: Mweene - Nkassu, Sunzu, Munthali (Malama 58), Mbola, Mtonga, Singuluma (Mulenga 84), Lungu, Musonda (Ngoma 71), Kangwa, Kalaba.

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia (Q)	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
DR Congo (Q)	3	0	3	0	2	2	3
Cape Verde	3	0	3	0	1	1	3
Zambia	3	0	2	1	2	3	2

Group C

Jan 19 - Mongomo

Ghana 1 (A Ayew pen 14)

Senegal 2 (Diouf 58, Sow 90+3)

HT: 1-0. Att: 13,569. Ref: Camille (Sey)

Ghana: Brimah - Afful, Amartey, Awal, Rahman, Mensah, Rabi (Acquah 83), J Ayew, Agyemang-Badu, Atsu (Wakaso 68), A Ayew (Accam 88).

Senegal:oundoul - L Sane, Djilobodji (Gassama 46), Mbodi, Badji, Gueye, Kouyate, Diop (Saivet 85), Souare, N'Doye (Sow 79), Diouf.

Jan 19 - Mongomo

Algeria 3 (Hlatshwayo og 67, Ghoulam 72, Slimani 83)

South Africa 1 (Phala 51)

HT: 0-0. Att: 12,788. Ref: Doue (IvC)

Algeria: M'Bolhi - Mandi, Medjani, Halliche, Ghoulam, Feghouli, Benteleb, Lacen (Taider 64), Mahrez (Belfodil 60), Slimani, Brahimi (Soudani 90).

South Africa: Keet - Ngcongca, Hlatshwayo, Coetzee (Nhlapo 30), Matlaba, Furman, Phala, Jali, Manyisa, Rantie (Ndulula 79), Vilakazi (Masango 85).

Jan 23 - Mongomo

Ghana 1 (Gyan 90+2)

Algeria 0

HT: 0-0. Att: 12,387. Ref: Coulibaly (Mli)

Ghana: Brimah - Amartey, Afful, Rahman, J Ayew (Otoo 78), Mensah, Agyemang-Badu, Acquah (Wakaso 55), A Ayew (Asante 84), Gyan, Atsu.

Algeria: M'Bolhi - Mandi, Medjani, Bougherra, Ghoulam, Feghouli, Benteleb, Lacen (Mahrez 71), Taider, Brahimi (Kadir 87), Belfodil (Slimani 56).

Jan 23 - Mongomo

South Africa 1 (Manyisa 47)

Senegal 1 (Mbodi 60)

HT: 0-0. Att: 13,674. Ref: Lemghaifry (Mra)

South Africa: Mabokgwane - Ngcongca, Hlatshwayo (Gcaba 30), Mathoho, Matlaba, Phala (Parker 67), Furman, Jali, Manyisa (Letsholonyane 72), Rantie, Vilakazi.

Senegal:oundoul - Gassama, L Sane, Mbodi, M'Bengue, Gueye, N'Diaye (Kouyate 84), Sow (N'Doye 80), Diop (Saivet 90), Mane, Diouf.

Jan 27 - Mongomo

South Africa 1 (Masango 17)

Ghana 2 (Boye 73, A Ayew 83)

HT: 1-0. Att: 13,670. Ref: Nampindrazza (Mad)

South Africa: Khuzwayo - Ngcongca, Mathoho, Coetzee, Matlaba, Phala (Vilakazi 58), Furman, Jali, Masango, Rantie (Letsholonyane 75), Ndulula (Parker 85).

Ghana: Brimah - Afful, Mensah, Amartey (Boye 36), Rahman, Acquah (Agyemang-Badu 70), Atsu, Wakaso, A Ayew, J Ayew (Appiah 70), Gyan.

Jan 27 - Malabo

Senegal 0

Algeria 2 (Mahrez 11, Benteleb 82)

HT: 0-1. Att: 14,549. Ref: Seechurn (Mrs)

Senegal:oundoul - L Sane, Djilobodji, Mbodi, M'Bengue (Souare 29), Gueye, Badji, Kouyate, Mane (N'Doye 66), Diop (Cisse 54), Diouf.

Algeria: M'Bolhi - Mandi, Medjani, Bougherra, Ghoulam, Benteleb, Feghouli, Taider, Brahimi (Lacen 72), Soudani (Belfodil 80), Mahrez (Kashi 90+2).

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana (Q)	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Algeria (Q)	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Senegal	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
South Africa	3	0	1	2	3	6	1

Group D

Jan 20 - Malabo

Ivory Coast 1 (Dombia 72)

Guinea 1 (M Yattara 36)

HT: 0-1. Att: 14,875. Ref: Abid Charef (Alg)

Jan 24 - Malabo

Cameroon 1 (Moukandjo 13)
Guinea 1 (Traore 42)

HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Bamlak (Eth)
Cameroon: Ondoa - Oyongo (Guihoata 62), Chedjou, N'Koulou, Bedimo, Mbia, Choupo-Moting, Loe (Kom 82), Moukandjo, Aboubakar (Etoundi 77), Salli.

Guinea: N Yattara - Sankoh, F Camara, Pogba (Cisse 45), Issiaga Sylla, Traore (Kamano 90+3), Constant, Fofana, Conte, Soumah (N Keita 66), M Yattara.

Jan 28 - Malabo

Cameroon 0

Ivory Coast 1 (Gradel 36)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,230. **Ref:** Otogo-Castane (Gab)
Cameroon: Ondoa - Guihoata, Chedjou, N'Koulou, Bedimo, Mbia, Moukandjo (N'Jie 67), Mandjeck, Salli (Aboubakar 46), Choupo-Moting, Etoundi (Kweuke 56).

Ivory Coast: Gbohouo - Aurier, Bailly (Viera 28), K Toure, Kanon, Serey Die, Gradel, Y Toure (Doukoure 82), Tiene, Doumbia (Tallo 60), Bony.

Jan 28 - Mongomo

Guinea 1 (Constant pen 15)

Mali 1 (Maiga 47)

HT: 1-0. **Att:** 13,470. **Ref:** Kordi (Tun)

Guinea: N Yattara - Cisse, Sankoh, F Camara, Issiaga Sylla (Paye 57), Traore (Soumah 62), Fofana, Conte, N Keita, Constant (Abdoul Camara 84), M Yattara.

Mali: Berthe - D Diakite, Wague, S Coulibaly, Tamboura, Diaby (Sako 72), Sylla, Maiga, N'Diaye (A Traore 90+1), Keita, M Yatabare (S Yatabare 84).

GROUP D								
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	
Ivory Coast (Q)	3	1	2	0	3	2	5	
Guinea (Q) ¹	3	0	3	0	3	3	3	
Mali ¹	3	0	3	0	3	3	3	
Cameroon	3	0	2	1	2	3	2	

¹Guinea placed 2nd, above Mali, after the drawing of lots

● Top 2 in each group qualified for quarter-finals

Quarter-finals

Jan 31 - Bata

Congo 2 (Dore 55, Bifouma 62)

DR Congo 4 (Mbokani 65, 90, Bokila 75, Kimwaki 81)

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 31,670. **Ref:** Camille (Sey)

Congo: Mafoumbi - Baudry, Babelo, Moubhio, Bissiki, N'Dinga, Litsingi (Gandze 84), Oniangue, Bouka Moutou (N'Guessi 84), Bifouma, Dore (D Malonga 75).

DR Congo: Kidiaba - Mpeko, Mongongu, Zakuani (Kimwaki 50), Kasusula, Bokila, Mbemba, Mabwati (Kebano 67), Makiadi (Munganga 89), Bolasie, Mbokani.

Jan 31 - Bata

Tunisia 1 (Akaichi 70)

Equatorial Guinea 2 (Balboa pen 90+3, 102)

Aet. HT: 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 41,000.

Ref: Seechurn (Mrs)

Tunisia: A Mathlouthi - H Mathlouthi, Abdenour, Ben Youssef, Maaloul, Yacoubi (Msakni 104), Sassi, Ragued, Akaichi (Chermitti 85), Khazri (Moncer 85), Chikhaoui.

Equatorial Guinea: Ovono - Randy (Bolado 80), Mbele, Rui, Sipo (Belima 86), Kike, Zarandona, Ellong, Balboa, Nsue, Fabiani (Iban 61).

Feb 1 - Malabo

Ghana 3 (Atsu 4, 61, Appiah 44)

Guinea 0

HT: 2-0. **Att:** 14,500. **Ref:** Sikazwe (Zam)

Ghana: Brimah - Afful, Boye, Mensah, Rahman, Acquah (Rabiu 86), Atsu (Acheampong 79), Wakaso, A Ayew, Gyan, Appiah.

Guinea: N Yattara - Cisse, Sankoh, F Camara, Paye, Traore, Conte, Fofana, Constant (N Keita 56), Abdoul Camara (Kamano 81), Idrissa Sylla (M Yattara 45). **Sent off:** N Yattara 90+4.

Feb 1 - Malabo

Ivory Coast 3 (Bony 26, 68, Gervinho 90+4)

Algeria 1 (Soudani 51)

HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Gassama (Gam)

Ivory Coast: Gbohouo - Aurier, Bailly, K Toure, Kanon, Gervinho, Y Toure, Serey Die, Tiene (Doukoure 67), Gradel, Bony (Tallo 90+1).

Algeria: M'Bolhi - Mandi, Medjani, Bougherra, Ghoulam, Bentaleb, Soudani (Slimani 72), Taider, Feghouli, Brahimi, Mahrez (Belfodil 72).

Semi-finals

Feb 4 - Bata

DR Congo 1 (Mbokani pen 24)

Ivory Coast 3 (Y Toure 21, Gervinho 41, Kanon 68)

HT: 1-2. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Alioum (Cam)

DR Congo: Kidiaba - Mpeko, Kimwaki, Zakuani, Kasusula, Mbemba, Makiadi (Mubele 79), Bokila, Mabwati (Kebano 69), Bolasie, Mbokani (Kabananga 61).

Ivory Coast: Gbohouo - Aurier, Bailly, K Toure, Kanon, Gradel (Kalou 62), Serey Die, Y Toure, Tiene (Viera 72), Bony (Traore 90+2), Gervinho.

Feb 5 - Malabo

Equatorial Guinea 0

Ghana 3 (J Ayew pen 42, Wakaso 45+1, A Ayew 75)

HT: 0-2. **Att:** 15,250. **Ref:** Otogo-Castane (Gab)

Equatorial Guinea: Ovono - Evuy (Fabiani 58), Mbele, Rui, Belima, Kike, Zarandona (Ganet 82), Ellong, Balboa, Iban (Sipo 74), Nsue.

Ghana: Brimah - Afful, Boye, Mensah, Rahman, Acquah, Wakaso (Agyemang-Badu 76), Atsu, J Ayew, A Ayew (Acheampong 82), Appiah.

3rd-place match

Feb 7 - Malabo

DR Congo 0

Equatorial Guinea 0

DR Congo 4-2 on pens

Ref: Grisha (Egy)

DR Congo: Kidiaba - Mpeko, Mongongu, Zakuani, Kasusula, Mabwati, Mbemba, Makiadi (Mabidi 72), Bolasie, Kage (Mbokani 46), Bokila (Kabananga 74).

Equatorial Guinea: Ovono - Randy, Rui, Evuy, Sipo, Kike (Miguel Angel 46), Zarandona (Ellong 46), Juvenal, Belima (Fabiani 85), Balboa, Nsue.

Final

Feb 8 - Bata

Ivory Coast 0

Ghana 0

Aet. Ivory Coast 9-8 on pens

Ref: Gassama (Gam)

Ivory Coast: Barry - Aurier, Bailly, K Toure, Kanon, Gradel (Doumbia 67), Serey Die, Y Toure, Tiene (Kalou 116), Bony, Gervinho (Tallo 120+2).

Ghana: Brimah - Afful, Boye, Mensah, Rahman, Atsu (Acheampong 117), Wakaso, Acquah, A Ayew, Gyan (Agyemang-Badu 120+1), Appiah (J Ayew 99).

Penalty shoot-out: (Ghana 1st)

Wakaso +	Bony X	(1-0)
J Ayew +	Tallo X	(2-0)
Acquah X	Aurier +	(2-1)
Acheampong X	Doumbia +	(2-2)
A Ayew +	Y Toure +	(3-3)
Mensah +	Kalou +	(4-4)
Agyemang-Badu +	K Toure +	(5-5)
Afful +	Kanon +	(6-6)
Rahman +	Bailly +	(7-7)
Boye +	Serey Die +	(8-8)
Brimah X	Barry +	(8-9)

Previous winners

1957	Egypt
1959	Egypt ¹
1962	Ethiopia
1963	Ghana
1965	Ghana
1968	DR Congo ²
1970	Sudan
1972	Congo
1974	DR Congo ³
1976	Morocco
1978	Ghana
1980	Nigeria
1982	Ghana
1984	Cameroon
1986	Egypt
1988	Cameroon
1990	Algeria
1992	Ivory Coast
1994	Nigeria
1996	South Africa
1998	Egypt
2000	Cameroon
2002	Cameroon
2004	Tunisia
2006	Egypt
2008	Egypt
2010	Egypt
2012	Zambia
2013	Nigeria

¹Playing as United Arab Republic, the name of a brief political union with Syria, but only Egyptian players were used

²Playing as Congo-Kinshasa

³Playing as Zaïre

ABCS TOURNAMENT

(ABCS = initials of the competing teams)

Played in Paramaribo, Surinam

Semi-finals

Jan 30

Curacao 0

Aruba 0

Aruba 5-3 on pens

Ref: Dolaini (Sur)

Curacao: Pisas - Tomsjansen, Curtly Hooi, Curly Hooi, Isenia, De Mey, Henriquez, Stokkel, Kunst, Alberto, J Martina.

Aruba: Lentink - Van Leenen, Ruiz, Donato, Lugay, Oehlers, Baten, Hassel, S Escalona, Santos, Fingal. **Subs used:** Bergen, Bosnia.

Jan 30

Surinam 3 (Vallei pen 10, Pokie, Cronie 85)

Bonaire 0

HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Adelina (Cur)

Surinam: Huiswoud - Vallei, Asabigie, G Kwasi, Nibte, Talea, Pokie, Eind, Waal, Esperance, Cronie. **Sent off:** Talea.

Bonaire: Josephia - Janga, Jaurretche, Gijssbertha, Zuniga (Burnet), Steba (Seinpaal), Homburg, Barzey, Trinidad, Robert Frans (Rodriguez Vergara 50), Francis. **Sent off:** Trinidad 5.

3rd-place match

Feb 1

Curacao 4 (Winklaar x2, J Martina x2)

Bonaire 1 (Barzey 85)

Ref: De Leca (Aru)

Curacao: Pisas - Sophia, Curtly Hooi, Curly Hooi, Isenia, De Mey, Henriquez, Willems, Kunst, Winklaar, J Martina.

Bonaire: Rishison Frans - Rodriguez Vergara, Zuniga, Gijssbertha, Jaurretche, Steba (Coffie), Janga (Burnet), Homburg, Robert Frans, Barzey, Francis (Trenidad).

Final

Feb 1

Surinam 1 (Cronie 85)

Aruba 0

HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Adelina (Cur)

Surinam: Huiswoud - Vallei, Asabigie, G Kwasi, Nibte, Esperance, Pokie, Eind, Waal, Holtuin, Cronie. **Subs used:** Loswijk, Alleyne, Kisoar.

Aruba: Lentink - Paesch, Van Leenen, Ruiz, Oehlers, Baten, Hassel, S Escalona, Santos, Fingal, Bergen.

Previous winners

2010	Surinam
2011	Bonaire
2012	Aruba
2013	Surinam

FRIENDLIES

Monday, January 19

Jan 19 - Orlando, USA

Canada 1 (De Rosario pen 30)

Iceland 1 (Fridjonsson pen 65)

HT: 1-0. **Att:** 200. **Ref:** Marrufu (USA)

Canada: Stamatoopoulos - Ouimette, James (Teibert 68), Jakovic, Attakora, Plette (Stanese 85), Straith, Nakajima-Farran (Morgan 75), De Guzman (Mannella 75), Tissot (Bernier 62), De Rosario (Hume 58).

Iceland: Kristinnson - Hauksdottir, Jonasson, Fjoluson, Arnason, R Gislason (Omarsson 46), Sigurjonsson (Palsson 46), Thorarinnson (Sverrisson 72), Valdimarsson (Finsen 61), Fridjonsson, Bodvarsson (Vilhjalmsdottir 46).

Jan 19 - Abu Dhabi, UAE

Sweden 0

Finland 1 (Roope Riski 63)

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 100. **Ref:** Al Ali (UAE)

Sweden: Johnsson - Augustinsson (Tinnerholm 46), E Johansson (Bergstrom 46), J Larsson, Holmen (Martensson 75), Gustafson, Lewicki, Rohden, Elminder (Lundevall 59), Ishak (Bahoui 64), Barkroth (Kiese Thelin 59).

Finland: Hradecky - Uronen, Moren, Patronen, Arkivuo, Kolehmainen (Laaksonen 76), Forsell (T Vayrynen 76), Sparv, Zeneli (M Vayrynen 61), Schuller (Lod 89), Pukki (Roope Riski 61).

Thursday, January 22

Jan 22 - Dubai, UAE

Yemen 0

Finland 0

Yemen: Ayash - Boqshan, Al Jarshi, Hamsan, Abdurabu, Al Sharif, Al Sasi, Al Hifi, Al Matari, Al Khyat, Al Gabr. **Finland:** H Moisander - Lampi (Uronen 46), Moren, Patronen, Jalasto (Arkivuo 61), Mattila, Sparv, M Vayrynen (T Vayrynen 46), Forsell, Roope Riski (Zeneli 85), Lod (Schuller 70).

Wednesday, January 28

Jan 28 - Rancagua

Chile 3 (R Gutierrez 10, M Gonzalez 66, 75)

United States 2 (Shea 6, Altidore 31)

HT: 1-2. **Att:** 12,420. **Ref:** Loustau (Arg)
Chile: Herrera - O Gonzalez, Rojas, Cornejo, Espinoza (Fierro 72), Pulgar, D Valdes (Delgado 59), M Medel (P Diaz 79), Carrasco, R Gutierrez (Vilches 90+3), M Gonzalez (Sagal 90).

United States: Rimando - Birnbaum, Jones, Besler, Yedlin, Bradley, Dempsey (Zardes 68), Diskerud (Trapp 60), Shea, Altidore (Wondolowski 75), Wood (Nguyen 46).

Sunday, February 1

Feb 1 - Waterford

Barbados 2 (Harris 36, Harte 37)

Guyana 2 (Holder 11, Welshman 33)

HT: 2-2. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Taylor (Bar)

Barbados: Weir - Morris, Bailey, Codrington, Browne, Holligan (Sargeant 81), Hunte, Harris (Headley 72), Harewood (Mayers 63), Harte (Stewart 90+2), Chandler (Gibson 54).
Guyana: Carter - Camacho, Nelson, Smith, Bobb, Mills (Wilson 55), Nurse, Jacobs (Shepherd 89), Phillips (Nobrega 63), Holder (Brown 59), Welshman (Schultz 67).

Monday, February 2

Feb 2 - Dhaka¹

Bangladesh 1 (Biswas 40)

Sri Lanka 0

HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Al Marri (Qat)

Bangladesh: Alam - Hasan, Yeasin Khan, N Chowdhury, Munna, Bhuyan, Islam, Biswas, Rana (Komal 90+1), Hossain (Raju 77), Ameli (Nasir 89).
Sri Lanka: Sujana Perera - Madushan, S Bandara, Kumara, Franga, Sanjeeva, Rifnas (Roshan 46), De Silva, Sanjeev (Gnaruban 79), D Bandara (Fazal 46), Ishan.

¹Part of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup tournament, which otherwise featured under-22 selections

Wednesday, February 4

Feb 4 - San Pedro Sula

Honduras 2 (Lozano 79, Montes 89)

Venezuela 3 (Blanco 20, Figueroa 50, Farias 76)

HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Aguilar (ESV)

Honduras: Escobar - A Peraltta (Crisanto 60), Velasquez, C Palacios, Montes, Garrido (Acosta 66), O Garcia (Quioto 75), M Martinez, Mendez (Claros 46), Castillo (Tejeda 60), Lozano.

Venezuela: Baroja - Carabali, Cichero, Sanchez, Fuenmayor, Lucena, Figueroa, Otero (Arteaga 90+3), Gomez (Farias 65), Blanco (Vargas 87), Lugo (Acosta 65).

Friday, February 6

Feb 6 - Lahore

Pakistan 2 (Riaz 18, S Ullah 90+1)

Afghanistan 1 (Anwar 58)

HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Khurram (Pak)

Pakistan: M Hussain - Bilal, N Ahmed, Riaz (Babar 90+3), B Rehman, Mehmood Khan, Mansoor Khan (S Ullah 82), Bashir, M Ali, S Hussain (

FIXTURES

2018 World Cup qualifiers

Asia, 1st rnd 1st legs - Mar 12; 2nd legs - Mar 17
Cambodia v Macau; East Timor v Mongolia;
India v Nepal; Sri Lanka v Bhutan; Taiwan v Brunei;
Yemen v Pakistan

CONCACAF, 1st rnd 1st legs - Mar 22-27;**2nd legs - Mar 26-31**

Bahamas v Bermuda; Barbados v US Virgin Islands;
Belize v Cayman Islands; British Virgin Islands v
Dominica; Curacao v Montserrat; Nicaragua v
Anguilla; St Kitts & Nevis v Turks & Caicos Islands

Euro 2016 qualifiers

Mar 27

Group C Macedonia v Belarus (Skopje); Slovakia v
Luxembourg (Zilina); Spain v Ukraine (Seville)

Group E England v Lithuania (London); Slovenia v San
Marino (Ljubljana); Switzerland v Estonia (Lucerne)

Group G Liechtenstein v Austria (Vaduz); Moldova v
Sweden (Chisinau); Montenegro v Russia (Podgorica)

Mar 28

Group A Czech Rep v Latvia (Prague); Holland v
Turkey (Amsterdam); Kazakhstan v Iceland (Astana)

Group B Andorra v Bosnia-Herz (Andorra La Vella);
Belgium v Cyprus (Brussels); Israel v Wales (Haifa)

Group H Azerbaijan v Malta (Baku); Bulgaria v Italy
(Sofia); Croatia v Norway (Zagreb)

Mar 29

Group D Georgia v Germany (Tbilisi); Rep Ireland v
Poland (Dublin); Scotland v Gibraltar (Glasgow)

Group F Hungary v Greece (Budapest); N Ireland v
Finland (Belfast); Romania v Faroe Islands (Ploesti)

Group I Albania v Armenia (Yerevan); Portugal v
Serbia (Lisbon)

Mar 31

Group B Israel v Belgium (Jerusalem)

Friendlies

Mar 6

Bermuda v Grenada (Hamilton)

Mar 8

Bermuda v Grenada (Hamilton)

Mar 25

China v Philippines (Beijing)

Denmark v United States (Aarhus)

Georgia v Malta (Tbilisi)

Germany v Australia (Kaiserslautern)

Scotland v Northern Ireland (Glasgow)

Mar 26

Canada v Guatemala (Fort Lauderdale, USA)

Costa Rica v Paraguay (San Jose)

France v Brazil (Paris)

Maldives v Tajikistan (Male)

Nigeria v Bolivia (Uyo)

Oman v Ivory Coast

Qatar v Algeria (Doha)

Thailand v Singapore (Bangkok)

Mar 27

Argentina v El Salvador (Landover, USA)

China v Bahrain (Guangzhou)

Japan v Tunisia (Oita)

Saudi Arabia v Colombia (Jeddah)

South Korea v Uzbekistan (Seoul)

Trinidad & Tobago v Panama (Port of Spain)

Mar 28

Mexico v Ecuador (Los Angeles, USA)

Morocco v Uruguay (Agadir)

Mar 29

Brazil v Chile (London)

El Salvador v Guatemala

France v Denmark (Saint-Etienne)

Nigeria v Ghana (London)

Mar 30

Oman v Algeria

Qatar v Slovenia (Doha)

Mar 31

Argentina v Ecuador (New York, USA)

Austria v Bosnia-Herzegovina (Vienna)

China v Tunisia (Nanjing)

Estonia v Iceland (Tallinn)

Holland v Spain (Amsterdam)

Italy v England (Turin)

Japan v Uzbekistan (Tokyo)

Kyrgyzstan v Afghanistan

Liechtenstein v San Marino (Eschen-Mauren)

Luxembourg v Turkey (Luxembourg)

Mexico v Paraguay (Kansas City, USA)

Panama v Costa Rica (Panama City)

Peru v Venezuela (Miami, USA)

Portugal v Cape Verde (Estoril)

Russia v Kazakhstan (Moscow)

Slovakia v Czech Republic (Zilina)

South Korea v New Zealand (Seoul)

Sweden v Iran (Stockholm)

Switzerland v United States (Zurich)

Ukraine v Latvia (Lviv)

Club football

SOUTH AMERICA

RECOPA

(Libertadores Cup holders, San Lorenzo v
Sudamericana Cup holders, River Plate)

1st leg

Feb 6

River Plate (Arg) 1 (Sanchez 77)

San Lorenzo (Arg) 0

HT: 0-0. Ref: Delfino (Arg)

River Plate: Barovero - Mercado, Maidana,
Funes Mori, Vangioni, Sanchez, Kranevitter,
Rojas (Mayada 71), Pisculich, Mora (Martinez 61),
Gutierrez (Cavenaghi 71).

San Lorenzo: Torrico - Buffarini, Cetto, Caruzzo,
Mas, Mercier, Kalinski, Mussis, Blanco (Veron 75),
Barrientos (Romagnoli 61), Cauteruccio (Matos 65).
Sent off: Romagnoli 87.

2nd leg

Feb 11

San Lorenzo 0

River Plate 1 (Sanchez 67)

HT: 0-0. Ref: Pitana (Arg)

River Plate 2-0 on agg

San Lorenzo: Torrico - Buffarini, Cetto, Caruzzo,
Mas, Mussis (Quignon 15; Veron 66), Mercier,
Villalba, Blanco, Barrientos (Matos 56),
Cauteruccio. *Sent off: Buffarini 90.*

River Plate: Barovero - Mercado, Maidana,
Funes Mori, Vangioni, Sanchez, Kranevitter, Rojas,
Pisculich (Martinez 61), Mora (Pezzella 84),
Gutierrez (Mayada 74). *Sent off: Funes Mori 81.*

Previous winners

1989 Nacional (Uru)

1990 Boca Juniors (Arg)

1991 Olimpia (Par)

1992 Colo Colo (Chl)

1993 Sao Paulo (Bra)

1994 Sao Paulo (Bra)

1995 Independiente (Arg)

1996 Gremio (Bra)

1997 Velez Sarsfield (Arg)

1998 Cruzeiro (Bra)

2003 Olimpia (Par)

2004 Cienciano (Per)

2005 Boca Juniors (Arg)

2006 Boca Juniors (Arg)

2007 Internacional (Bra)

2008 Boca Juniors (Arg)

2009 LDU Quito (Ecu)

2010 LDU Quito (Ecu)

2011 Internacional (Bra)

2012 Santos (Bra)

2013 Corinthians (Bra)

2014 Atletico Mineiro (Bra)

LIBERTADORES CUP

1st round

1st legs - Feb 3-5; 2nd legs - Feb 10-12

Alianza Lima (Per) v Huracan (Arg)

0-4, 0-0 (agg 0-4)

Corinthians (Bra) v Once Caldas (Col)

4-0, 1-1 (agg 5-1)

Deportivo Tachira (Ven) v Cerro Porteno (Par)

2-1, 2-2 (agg 4-3)

Independiente del Valle (Ecu) v Estudiantes (Arg)

1-0, 0-4 (agg 1-4)

Morelia (Mex) v The Strongest (Bol)

1-1, 0-2 (agg 1-3)

Palestino (Chl) v Nacional (Uru)

1-0, 1-2 (agg 2-2, Palestino on away goals)

● **Winners qualified for group stage**

CONCACAF

BELIZE

2014-15 Apertura Final

1st leg - Jan 14; 2nd leg - Jan 18

Belmopan Bandits v Police United 0-0, 4-0 (agg 4-0)

Previous champions (2 most recent seasons)

2013 Police United

2013-14 Belmopan Bandits (apertura)

Belmopan Bandits (clausura)

AFRICA

MALAWI

2014 - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Big Bullets (C)	28	18	8	2	45	18	62
Moyale B'cks	28	16	5	7	44	25	53
Blue Eagles	28	15	5	8	51	30	50
CIVO United	28	12	9	7	35	27	45
Silver Strikers'	28	15	6	7	48	26	42
Red Lions	28	12	6	10	31	30	42
MAFCO	28	11	8	9	50	38	41
Azam Tigers	28	11	8	9	34	26	41
Mighty W's ²	28	13	4	11	26	22	37
Kamuzu B'cks	28	10	6	12	30	30	36
EPAC United	28	6	12	10	21	32	30
Airborne R'grs	28	8	6	14	36	48	30
Blantyre U (R)	28	5	6	17	19	44	21
Chikwawa (R)	28	5	5	18	23	56	20
Karonga (R)	28	4	4	20	25	66	16

¹9pts deducted ²6pts deducted - both for fan violence during an abandoned 2013 season meeting

Previous champions (5 most recent)

2009-10 Silver Strikers

2010-11 ESCOM United

2011-12 Silver Strikers

2012-13 Silver Strikers

2013 Silver Strikers

ASIA

PAKISTAN

2014-15 - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
K-Electric (C)	22	15	3	4	43	20	48
Army	22	13	6	3	30	7	45
Air Force	22	12	6	4	38	14	42
Int'l Airlines	22	11	5	6	28	18	38
WAPDA	22	10	6	6	31	14	36
Khan Research	22	8	7	7	19	16	31
National Bank	22	8	6	8	21	17	30
Muslim	22	8	5	9	26	26	29
K Port Trust	22	9	2	11	29	38	29
Afghan	22	6	5	11	24	29	23
Railways (R)	22	1	7	14	13	45	10
Baloch Q (R)	22	0	4	18	6	64	4

Previous champions (5 most recent)

2009 Khan Research Laboratories

2010 Water & Power Development Authority

2011 Khan Research Laboratories

2012-13 Khan Research Laboratories

2013-14 Khan Research Laboratories

OCEANIA

OFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Draw

Group A

Ba (Fij), Gaitcha (NC), Lupe Ole Soaga (Sam),

Pirae (Tah)

To be played in Ba, Fiji, Apr 11-18

Group B

Amicale (Van), Auckland City (NZ),

Suva (Fij), Western United (Sol)

To be played in Suva, Fiji, Apr 11-18

Group C

Hekari United (PNG), Tafua (Van),

Team Wellington (NZ), Tefana (Tah)

To be played in Suva, Fiji, Apr 12-17

● **Group winners and the runner-up with the best record qualify for semi-finals**

KEY TO TABLES

(C) = champions

(R) = relegated

(Q) = qualified for next stage



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HOW IT WORKS

Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit worldsoccer.com/esm11

SEASON RANKINGS

Cumulative votes through the season

GOALKEEPERS

David DE GEA (Manchester United)	15 votes
Manuel NEUER (Bayern Munich)	13
Gianluigi BUFFON (Juventus)	11
Thibaut COURTOIS (Chelsea)	6
David OSPINA (Arsenal)	3
Claudio BRAVO (Barcelona)	2
Iker CASILLAS (Real Madrid)	2
ROBERTO (Olympiakos)	2
Danijel SUBASIC (Monaco)	2
Sergio ALVAREZ (Celta Vigo)	1
Diego ALVES (Valencia)	1
Fraser FORSTER (Southampton)	1
Jasmin HANDANOVIC (Maribor)	1
Hugo LLORES (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Anthony LOPES (Lyon)	1
Diego LOPEZ (Milan)	1
Steve MANDANDA (Marseille)	1
Stephane RUFFIER (Saint-Etienne)	1

DEFENDERS

Sergio RAMOS (Real Madrid)	21
Branislav IVANOVIC (Chelsea)	19
Giorgio CHIellini (Juventus)	13
PEPE (Real Madrid)	13
John TERRY (Chelsea)	11
Juan BERNAT (Bayern Munich)	9
Diego GODIN (Atletico Madrid)	9
MARCELO (Real Madrid)	9
MIRANDA (Atletico Madrid)	7
Jerome BOATENG (Bayern Munich)	6
JUANFRAN (Atletico Madrid)	6
Stephan LICHTSTEINER (Juventus)	6
Jeremy MATHIEU (Barcelona)	6
Ricardo RODRIGUEZ (Wolfsburg)	6
Pablo ZABALETA (Manchester City)	6
David ALABA (Bayern Munich)	5
Nathaniel CLYNE (Southampton)	5
NALDO (Wolfsburg)	5
Gerard PIQUE (Barcelona)	5
David LUJIZ (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Nicolas OTAMENDI (Valencia)	4
Javier MASCHERANO (Barcelona)	4
Nicolas N'KOULOU (Marseille)	4
Jordi ALBA (Barcelona)	3
Leonardo BONUCCI (Juventus)	3
Kostas MANOLAS (Roma)	3
MAXWELL (Paris Saint-Germain)	3
Mehdi BENATIA (Bayern Munich)	2
Gary CAHILL (Chelsea)	2
Dani CARVAJAL (Real Madrid)	2
Ashley COLE (Roma)	2
DANILO (Porto)	2
Jose FONTE (Southampton)	2
Jose Luis GAYA (Valencia)	2
Nacho MONREAL (Arsenal)	2
Danny ROSE (Tottenham Hotspur)	2
Martin SKRTEL (Liverpool)	2
Paul VERHAEGH (Augsburg)	2
Aymen ABDENNOUR (Monaco)	1
Toby ALDERWEIRELD (Southampton)	1
Dani ALVES (Barcelona)	1
Davide ASTORI (Roma)	1

Cesar AZPILICUETA (Chelsea)	1
Ryan BERTRAND (Southampton)	1
Milan BISEVAC (Lyon)	1
Alex BRUCE (Hull City)	1
Martin CACERES (Juventus)	1
CAICARA (Ludogorets)	1
CARLAO (APOEL)	1
Gael CLICHY (Manchester City)	1
Scott DANN (Crystal Palace)	1
Patrice EVRA (Juventus)	1
Rod FANNI (Marseille)	1
Kieran GIBBS (Arsenal)	1
Fauzi GHOUAM (Napoli)	1
Jose GIMENEZ (Atletico Madrid)	1
Raphael GUERREIRO (Lorient)	1
Benedikt HOWEDES (Schalke)	1
Christophe JALLET (Lyon)	1
Daryl JANMAAT (Newcastle United)	1
Tin JEDVAJ (Bayer Leverkusen)	1
JEFFERSON (Sporting Lisbon)	1
Aleksandar KOLAROV (Manchester City)	1
Laurent KOSCIELNY (Arsenal)	1
Filipe LUIS (Chelsea)	1
MAICON (Roma)	1
Elaquim MANGALA (Manchester City)	1
MARQUINHOS (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Philippe MEXES (Milan)	1
Alberto MORENO (Liverpool)	1
Fernando NAVARRO (Sevilla)	1
Paulo OLIVEIRA (Sporting Lisbon)	1
RAFINHA (Bayern Munich)	1
Kariem REFIK (PSV)	1
Winston REID (West Ham United)	1
Martin STRANZL (Borussia Monchengladbach)	1
Gregory VAN DER WIEL (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Raphael VARANE (Real Madrid)	1
WENDELL (Bayer Leverkusen)	1

MIDFIELDERS

Arjen ROBBEN (Bayern Munich)	26
Cesc FABREGAS (Chelsea)	24
Paul POGBA (Juventus)	17
Toni KROOS (Real Madrid)	13
Xabi ALONSO (Bayern Munich)	12
Kevin DE BRUYNE (Wolfsburg)	10
Eden HAZARD (Chelsea)	10
Yaya TOURE (Manchester City)	9
Mario GOTZE (Bayern Munich)	8
Antoine GRIEZMANN (Atletico Madrid)	7
ISCO (Real Madrid)	7
Philipp LAHM (Bayern Munich)	7
Nemanja MATIC (Chelsea)	5
James RODRIGUEZ (Real Madrid)	5
Radja NAINGGOLAN (Roma)	4
Santi CAZORLA (Arsenal)	3
Christian ERIKSEN (Tottenham Hotspur)	3
Angel DI MARIA (Manchester United)	3
NANI (Sporting Lisbon)	3
Dani PAREJO (Valencia)	3
Andrea PIRLO (Juventus)	3
Miralem PJANIC (Roma)	3
David SILVA (Manchester City)	3
ARDA Turan (Atletico Madrid)	2
Gareth BALE (Real Madrid)	2
Jose Maria CALLEJON (Napoli)	2
Giannelli IMBULA (Marseille)	2
KOKE (Atletico Madrid)	2
Frank LAMPARD (Manchester City)	2
Thomas MULLER (Bayern Munich)	2
Ivan RAKITIC (Barcelona)	2
Arturo VIDAL (Juventus)	2
Karim BELLARABI (Bayer Leverkusen)	1
Denis CHERYSHEV (Villarreal)	1
GABI (Atletico Madrid)	1
Maxime GONALONS (Lyon)	1
Yoann GOURCUFF (Lyon)	1
Hector HERRERA (Porto)	1



Wesley SNEIJDER (Galatasaray)	1
TALISCA (Benfica)	1
Jeremy TOULALAN (Monaco)	1
Granit XHAKA (Borussia Monchengladbach)	1

Alexis SANCHEZ (Arsenal)	5
Francesco TOTTI (Roma)	4
Wayne ROONEY (Manchester United)	3
Luiz ADRIANO (Shakhtar Donetsk)	2
Paulo DYBALA (Palermo)	2
Andre-Pierre GIGNAC (Marseille)	2
Alexander MEIER (Eintracht Frankfurt)	2
Diafra SAKHO (West Ham United)	2
Paco ALCACER (Valencia)	1
Eljero ELIA (Southampton)	1
Mauro ICARDI (Internazionale)	1
Jackson MARTINEZ (Porto)	1
Dimitry PAYET (Marseille)	1
Fernando TORRES (Atletico Madrid)	1
Danny WELBECK (Arsenal)	1
Simone ZAZA (Sassuolo)	1

FORWARDS

Cristiano RONALDO (Real Madrid)	50
Lionel MESSI (Barcelona)	33
Sergio AGUERO (Manchester City)	19
Diego COSTA (Chelsea)	17
NEYMAR (Barcelona)	14
Karim BENZEMA (Real Madrid)	8
Alexandre LACAZETTE (Lyon)	8
Harry KANE (Tottenham Hotspur)	6
Carlos TEVEZ (Juventus)	6
Graziano PELLE (Southampton)	5

ESM - EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

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AFRICAN NATIONS CUP SQUADS

ALGERIA

GOALKEEPERS

1 Azzedine DOUKHA	(28)	05.08.86	JS Kabylie
23 Rais M'BOLHI	(28)	25.04.86	Philadelphia Union (USA)
16 Cedric SI MOHAMED	(30)	09.01.85	CS Constantine

DEFENDERS

2 Madjid BOUGHERRA	(32)	07.10.82	Al Fujairah (UAE)
4 Liassine CADAMURO	(26)	05.03.88	Osasuna (Spa)
3 Faouzi GHOULAM	(23)	01.02.91	Napoli (Ita)
5 Rafik HALLICHE	(28)	02.09.86	Qatar SC (Qat)
20 Aissa MANDI	(23)	22.10.91	Reims (Fra)
12 Carl MEDJANI	(29)	15.05.85	Trabzonspor (Tur)
6 Djamel MESBAH	(30)	09.10.84	Sampdoria (Ita)
22 Mehdi ZEFFANE	(22)	19.05.92	Lyon (Fra)

MIDFIELDERS

14 Nabil BENTALEB	(20)	24.11.94	Tottenham H (Eng)
11 Yacine BRAHIMI	(24)	08.02.90	Porto (Por)
18 Abdelmoumene DIABOU	(27)	31.01.87	Club Africain (Tun)
10 Sofiane FEGHOULI	(25)	26.12.89	Valencia (Spa)
17 Foued KADIR	(31)	05.12.83	Real Betis (Spa)
21 Ahmed KASHI	(26)	18.11.88	Metz (Fra)
8 Medhi LACEN	(30)	15.05.84	Getafe (Spa)
7 Riyad MAREZ	(23)	21.02.91	Leicester City (Eng)
19 Saphir TAIDER	(22)	29.02.92	Sassuolo (Ita)

FORWARDS

9 Ishak BELFODIL	(23)	12.01.92	Parma (Ita)
13 Islam SLIMANI	(26)	18.06.88	Sporting Lisbon (Por)
15 El Arbi SOUDANI	(27)	25.11.87	Dinamo Zagreb (Cro)

COACH

Christian GOURCUFF	(Fra)	(59)	05.04.55
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BURKINA FASO

GOALKEEPERS

1 Moussa FOFANA	(22)	31.07.92	Kadiogo
23 Germain SANOU	(22)	26.05.92	Beauvais (Fra)
16 Abdoulaye SOULAMA	(35)	29.11.79	Hearts of Oak (Gha)

DEFENDERS

14 Wilfried BALIMA	(29)	20.03.85	Sheriff (Mol)
13 Narcisse BAMBARA	(25)	23.06.89	Uni Cluj (Rom)
9 Issa GOUO	(25)	09.09.89	Kaloum Star (Gui)
5 Mohamed KOFFI	(28)	30.12.86	Zamalek (Egy)
4 Bakary KONE	(26)	27.04.88	Lyon (Fra)
8 Paul KOULIBALY	(28)	24.03.86	Horoya (Gui)
2 Steeve YAGO	(22)	16.12.92	Toulouse (Fra)

MIDFIELDERS

12 Adama GUIRA	(26)	24.04.88	SonderjysKE (Den)
18 Charles KABORE	(26)	09.02.88	Kuban Kras' dar (Rus)
6 Djakaridja KONE	(28)	22.07.86	Evian (Fra)
22 Prejude NAKOUUMA	(27)	21.04.87	Mersin (Tur)
11 Jonathan PITROIPA	(28)	12.04.86	Al Jazira (UAE)
7 Florent ROUAMBA	(28)	31.12.86	Bastia (Fra)
10 Alain TROORE	(26)	31.12.88	Lorient (Fra)
19 Bertrand TROORE	(19)	06.09.95	Vitesse (Hol)
3 Moussa YEDAN	(25)	20.07.89	Al Ahly (Egy)
17 Jonathan ZONGO	(22)	02.12.92	Almeria (Spa)

FORWARDS

15 Aristide BANCE	(30)	19.09.84	HJK (Fin)
20 Issiaka OUEDRAOGO	(26)	19.08.88	Admira (Aut)
21 Abdou TROORE	(26)	28.12.88	Karabukspor (Tur)

COACH

Paul PUT	(Blg)	(58)	26.05.56
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CAMEROON

GOALKEEPERS

23 Pierre Sylvain ABOGO	(21)	18.07.93	Tonnerre Yaounde
1 Guy N'DY ASSEMBE	(28)	28.02.86	Nancy (Fra)
16 Fabrice ONDOA	(19)	24.12.95	Barcelona B (Spa)

DEFENDERS

9 Frank BAGNACK	(19)	07.06.95	Barcelona B (Spa)
12 Henri BEDIMO	(30)	04.06.84	Lyon (Fra)
21 Aurelien CHEDJOU	(29)	20.06.85	Galatasaray (Tur)
19 Cedric DJEUQUE	(22)	28.08.92	Coton Sport
5 Jerome GUIHOATA	(20)	07.10.94	Valenciennes (Fra)
3 Nicolas N'KOULOU	(24)	27.03.90	Marseille (Fra)
6 Ambroise OYONGO	(23)	22.06.91	New York RB (USA)

MIDFIELDERS

22 Patrick EKENG	(24)	26.03.90	Cordoba (Spa)
18 Eyang ENOH	(28)	23.03.86	Standard Liege (Blg)
20 Franck KOM	(23)	18.09.91	Etoile du Sahel (Tun)
4 Raoul LOE	(25)	31.01.89	Osasuna (Spa)
14 Georges MANDJECK	(26)	09.12.88	Kayseri Erciyesspor (Tur)
17 Stephane MBIA	(28)	20.05.86	Sevilla (Spa)
8 Benjamin MOUKANDJO	(26)	12.11.88	Reims (Fra)
7 Clinton N'JIE	(21)	15.08.93	Lyon (Fra)
11 Edgar SALLI	(22)	17.08.92	Academica (Por)

FORWARDS

10 Vincent ABOUBAKAR	(22)	22.01.92	Porto (Por)
13 Eric Maxim CHOUPO-MOTING	(25)	23.03.89	Schalke (Ger)
15 Franck ETOUNDI	(24)	30.08.90	Zurich (Swi)
2 Leonard KWEUKE	(27)	12.07.87	Caykur Rizespor (Tur)

COACH

Volker FINKE	(Ger)	(66)	24.03.48
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CAPE VERDE

GOALKEEPERS

16 Ivan CRUZ	(18)	03.05.96	Gil Vicente (Por)
12 KEN	(20)	06.06.94	Nacional (Por)
1 VOZINHA	(28)	03.06.86	Progresso (Ang)

DEFENDERS

23 CARLITOS	(29)	23.04.85	AEL Limassol (Cyp)
22 Jeffrey FORTES	(25)	22.03.89	Dordrecht (Hol)
14 GEGE	(26)	24.02.88	Maritimo (Por)
4 KAY	(27)	05.01.88	CSU Craiova (Rom)
18 NIVALDO	(26)	10.07.88	Tepeco (CzR)
2 STOPIRA	(26)	20.05.88	Videoton (Hun)
3 Fernando VARELA	(27)	26.11.87	Steaua (Rom)

MIDFIELDERS

5 BABANCO	(29)	27.07.85	Estoril (Por)
17 CALU	(31)	20.09.83	Progresso (Ang)
13 PLATINI	(28)	16.04.86	CSKA Sofia (Bul)
15 Nuno ROCHA	(22)	25.03.92	CSU Craiova (Rom)
6 Sergio SEMEDO	(26)	23.02.88	Olhanense (Por)
8 Toni VARELA	(28)	13.06.86	Excelsior (Hol)

FORWARDS

21 DJANINY	(23)	21.03.91	Santos Laguna (Mex)
7 Odair FORTES	(27)	31.03.87	Reims (Fra)
10 HELDON	(26)	14.11.88	Sporting Lisbon (Por)
9 KUCA	(25)	02.08.89	Estoril (Por)
20 Ryan MENDES	(25)	08.01.90	Lille (Fra)
11 Garry RODRIGUES	(24)	27.11.90	Elche (Spa)
19 Julio TAVARES	(26)	19.11.88	Dijon (Fra)

COACH

Rui AGUAS	(Por)	(54)	28.04.60
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CONGO

GOALKEEPERS

1 Christoffer MAFOUMBI	(20)	03.03.94	Le Pontet (Fra)
16 Chancel MASSA	(29)	28.08.85	Leopards
22 Pavel NDZILA	(20)	12.02.91	Etoile du Congo

DEFENDERS

18 Marvin BAUDRY	(24)	26.01.90	Amiens (Fra)
6 Dimitri BISSIKI	(23)	17.03.91	Leopards
5 Arnold BOUKA MOUTOU	(26)	28.11.88	Angers (Fra)
23 Atoni MAVOUNGOU	(18)	22.12.96	ACNFF
4 Boris MOUBHIO	(26)	25.10.88	Leopards
2 Francis N'GANGA	(29)	16.06.85	Charleroi (Blg)
3 Igor N'GANGA	(27)	14.04.87	Aarau (Swi)

MIDFIELDERS

21 Sagesse BABELE	(21)	13.02.93	Leopards
20 Hardy BINGUILA	(18)	17.07.96	Diablos Noirs
14 Cesaire GANDZE	(25)	06.03.89	Leopards
12 Francis LITSINGI	(28)	10.09.86	Tepeco (CzR)
17 Chris MALONGA	(27)	11.07.87	Lausanne (Swi)
8 Delvin N'DINGA	(26)	14.03.88	Olympiakos (Gre)
7 Prince ONIANGUE	(26)	04.11.88	Reims (Fra)

FORWARDS

13 Thievy BIFOUMA	(22)	13.05.92	Almeria (Spa)
10 Ferebory DORE	(25)	21.01.89	CFR Cluj (Rom)
15 Ladislav DOUMIAMA	(28)	24.05.86	Guingamp (Fra)
9 Silvere GANVOULA	(18)	22.06.96	Raja (Mor)
19 Dominique MALONGA	(26)	08.01.89	Hibernian (Sco)
11 Fabrice N'GUESSI	(26)	27.01.88	Wydad (Mor)

COACH

Claude LE ROY	(Fra)	(66)	06.02.48
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DR CONGO

GOALKEEPERS

1 Robert KIDIABA	(38)	01.02.76	Mazembe
16 Muloop KUDIMBANA	(27)	21.01.87	Anderlecht (Blg)
23 Parfait MANDANDA	(25)	10.10.89	Charleroi (Blg)

DEFENDERS

3 Jean KASUSULA	(28)	05.08.86	Mazembe
15 Joel KIMWAKI	(28)	14.10.86	Mazembe
12 Bawaka MABELE	(26)	09.06.88	Vita Club
22 Chancel MBEMBA	(20)	08.08.94	Anderlecht (Blg)
17 Cedric MONGONGU	(25)	22.06.89	Evian (Fra)
2 Issama MPEKO	(28)	03.03.86	Kabuscorp (Ang)
4 Christopher OUALEMBO	(27)	31.01.87	Academica (Por)
14 Gabriel ZAKUANI	(28)	31.05.86	Peterborough U (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

11 Yannick BOLASIE	(25)	24.05.89	Crystal Palace (Eng)
8 Herve KAGE	(25)	10.04.89	Genk (Blg)
10 Neeskens KEBANO	(22)	10.03.92	Charleroi (Blg)
20 Lema MABIDI	(21)	11.06.93	Vita Club
18 Cedrick MABWATI	(22)	08.03.92	Osasuna (Spa)
6 Cedric MAKIADI	(30)	23.02.84	Werder Bremen (Ger)
7 Youssouf MULUMBU	(27)	25.01.87	WBA (Eng)
5 Nelson MUNGANGA	(21)	27.07.93	Vita Club

FORWARDS

19 Jeremy BOKILA	(26)	14.11.88	Terek Grozny (Rus)
13 Junior KABANANGA	(25)	04.04.89	Cercle Brugge (Blg)
9 Dieumerci MBOKANI	(29)	22.11.85	Dynamo Kiev (Ukr)
21 Ndombe MUBELE	(20)	17.04.94	Vita Club

COACH

Florent IBENGE	(53)	04.12.61	
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EQUATORIAL GUINEA

GOALKEEPERS

13 Aitor EMBELA	(18)	17.04.96	Malaga (Spa)
23 Carlos MOSIBE	(23)	12.03.91	Atletico Malabo
1 Felipe OVONO	(21)	26.07.93	Deportivo Mongomo

DEFENDERS

20 Miguel ANGEL	(24)	08.12.90	Akonangui
3 Igor ENGONGA	(20)	04.01.95	Tropezon (Spa)
2 Dani EVUY	(29)	11.03.85	(unattached)
5 Diosdado MBELE	(17)	08.04.97	Leones Vegetarianos
8 RANDY	(27)	02.06.87	Iraklis Psachna (Gre)
4 RUI	(29)	28.05.85	Hibernians (Mlt)
16 SIPO	(26)	21.04.88	AEK Lamaca (Cyp)

MIDFIELDERS

11 Javier BALBOA	(29)	13.05.85	Estoril (Por)
7 Ruben BELIMA	(22)	11.02.92	Castilla (Spa)
19 CHARLY	(29)	18.02.85	College Europa (Gib)
18 Viera ELLONG	(27)	14.06.87	The Panthers
22 Pablo GANET	(20)	04.11.94	San Sebastian de los Reyes (Spa)
15 IBAN	(19)	11.12.95	Valencia Mestalla (Spa)
6 JUVENAL	(35)	03.04.79	FC Santa Coloma (And)
14 KIKE	(21)	17.07.93	Mallorca B (Spa)
10 Emilio NSUE	(25)	30.09.89	Middlesbrough (Eng)
21 Ivan ZARANDONA	(34)	30.08.80	Biu Chun Rangers (HK)

FORWARDS

12 Ivan BOLADO	(25)	03.07.89	Pune City (Ind)
17 Ruben DARIO	(21)	21.06.93	Leones Vegetarianos
9 Raul FABIANI	(30)	23.02.84	Olimpic Xativa (Spa)

COACH

Esteban BECKER	(Arg)	(50)	31.08.64
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GABON

GOALKEEPERS

23 Yves BITSEKI MOTO	(31)	23.04.83	Bitam
16 Anthony MFA MEZUI	(23)	07.03.91	Metz (Fra)
1 Didier OVONO	(31)	23.01.83	Oostende (Blg)

DEFENDERS

2	Aaron APPINDANGOYE	(22)	02.02.92	Mounana
5	Bruno ECUELE MANGA	(26)	16.07.88	Cardiff City (Eng)
4	Yrondy MUSAVU-KING	(23)	08.01.92	Caen (Fra)
15	Henn Junior NDONG	(22)	23.08.92	Auxerre (Fra)
6	Johann OBIANG	(21)	05.07.93	Chateauxroux (Fra)
14	Randal OTU'O	(20)	23.05.94	Nice (Fra)
8	Lloyd PALUN	(26)	28.11.88	Braga (Por)
19	Benjamin ZE ONDO	(27)	18.06.87	ES Setif (Alg)

GHANA

GOALKEEPERS

1 Razak BRIMAH	(27)	22.06.87	Mirandes (Spa)
16 Fatao DAUDA	(29)	06.04.85	Ashanti Gold
12 Ernest SOWAH	(26)	31.03.88	Don Bosco (DRC)

DEFENDERS

23 Harrison AFFUL	(28)	24.06.86	Esperance (Tun)
18 Daniel AMARTEY	(20)	21.12.94	Copenhagen (Den)
5 Mohamed AWAL	(26)	01.05.88	Maritzburg United (SA)
21 John BOYE	(27)	23.04.87	Kaysieri Erciyesspor (Tur)
4 Edwin GYIMAH	(23)	09.03.91	Mpumalanga Black Aces (SA)
19 Jonathan MENSAH	(24)	13.07.90	Evian (Fra)
17 Baba RAHMAN	(20)	02.07.94	Augsburg (Ger)

MIDFIELDERS

22 Frank ACHEAMPONG	(21)	16.10.93	Anderlecht (Belg)
6 Afriyie ACQUAH	(23)	05.01.92	Parma (Ita)
8 Emmanuel AGYEMANG-BADU	(24)	02.12.90	Udinese (Ita)
14 Solomon ASANTE	(24)	15.09.90	Mazembe (DRC)
7 Christian ATSU	(23)	10.01.92	Everton (Eng)
10 Andre AYEW	(25)	17.12.89	Marseille (Fra)
13 Mohammed RABIU	(25)	31.12.89	Kuban Krasnodar (Rus)
11 WAKASO Mubarak	(24)	25.07.90	Celtic (Sco)

FORWARDS

20 David ACCAM	(24)	28.09.90	Chicago Fire (USA)
2 Kwesi APPIAH	(24)	12.08.90	Cambridge United (Eng)
9 Jordan AYEW	(23)	11.09.91	Lorient (Fra)
3 Asamoah GYAN	(29)	22.11.85	Al Ain (UAE)
15 Mahatma OTOO	(22)	06.02.92	Sogndal (Nor)

COACH

Avram GRANT (Isr)	(59)	06.02.55
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GUINEA

GOALKEEPERS

22 Aboubacar CAMARA	(21)	01.06.93	UCAM Murcia (Spa)
16 Abdoul KEITA	(24)	17.06.90	Kaloum Star
1 Naby YATTARA	(31)	12.01.84	Arles Avignon (Fra)

DEFENDERS

5 Fode CAMARA	(26)	17.08.88	Horoya
13 Abdoulaye CISSE	(20)	30.11.94	Angers B (Fra)
21 Mohammed DIARRA	(22)	02.06.92	OB (Den)
23 Djibril PAYE	(24)	26.02.90	Zulte Waregem (Belg)
4 Florentin POGBA	(24)	19.08.90	Saint-Etienne (Fra)
20 Baissama SANKOH	(22)	20.03.92	Guingamp (Fra)
3 Issiaga SYLLA	(21)	01.01.94	Toulouse (Fra)
6 Kamil ZAVATTE	(29)	07.03.85	Sheffield Wed (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

7 Abdoul CAMARA	(24)	20.02.90	Angers (Fra)
14 Lanfia CAMARA	(28)	03.10.86	Racing Mechelen (Belg)
10 Kevin CONSTANT	(27)	15.05.87	Trabzonspor (Tur)
12 Ibrahima CONTE	(23)	03.04.91	Anderlecht (Belg)
17 Boubacar FOFANA	(25)	06.11.89	Nacional (Por)
15 Naby KEITA	(19)	10.02.95	Red Bull Salzburg (Aut)
9 Guy-Michel LANDEL	(24)	07.07.90	Orduspor (Tur)
18 Seydouba SOUHAI	(23)	11.06.91	Slovan Bratislava (Slk)
8 Ibrahimia TRAORE	(26)	21.04.88	Bor M'gladbach (Ger)

FORWARDS

19 Francois KAMANO	(18)	02.05.96	Bastia (Fra)
11 Idrissa SYLLA	(24)	03.12.90	Zulte Waregem (Belg)
2 Mohamed YATTARA	(21)	28.07.93	Lyon (Fra)

COACH

Michel DUSSUYER (Fra)	(55)	28.05.59
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IVORY COAST

GOALKEEPERS

1 Boubacar BARRY	(35)	30.12.79	Lokeren (Belg)
16 Sylvain GBOHOU	(26)	29.10.88	Sewu Sport
23 Sayouba MANDE	(21)	15.06.93	Stabaek (Nor)

DEFENDERS

13 Jean-Daniel AKPA-AKPRO	(22)	11.10.92	Toulouse (Fra)
17 Serge AURIER	(22)	24.12.92	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
21 Eric BAILLY	(20)	12.04.94	Espanyol (Spa)
22 Wilfried KANON	(21)	06.07.93	Den Haag (Hol)
5 Siaka TIENE	(32)	22.02.82	Montpellier (Fra)
4 Kolo TOURE	(33)	19.03.81	Liverpool (Eng)
2 Ousmane VIERA	(28)	21.12.86	Caykur Rizespor (Tur)

MIDFIELDERS

3 Roger ASSALE	(21)	13.11.93	Mazembe (DRC)
20 Serey DIE	(30)	07.11.84	Basle (Swi)
14 Ismael DIOMANDE	(22)	28.08.92	Saint-Etienne (Fra)
6 Cheick DOUKOURE	(22)	11.09.92	Metz (Fra)
15 Max GRADEL	(27)	30.11.87	Saint-Etienne (Fra)
9 Cheick TIOTE	(28)	21.06.86	Newcastle United (Eng)
19 Yaya TOURE	(31)	13.05.83	Manchester City (Eng)

FORWARDS

12 Wilfried BONY	(26)	10.12.88	Manchester City (Eng)
7 Seydou DOUMBIA	(27)	31.12.87	CSKA Moscow (Rus)
10 GERVINHO	(27)	27.05.87	Roma (Ita)
8 Salomon KALOU	(29)	05.08.85	Hertha Berlin (Ger)
11 Junior TALLO	(22)	21.12.92	Bastia (Fra)
18 Lacina TRAORE	(24)	20.05.90	Monaco (Fra)

COACH

Herve RENARD (Fra)	(46)	30.09.68
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MALI

GOALKEEPERS

1 Germain BERTHE	(21)	24.10.93	Onze Createurs
16 Soumbeila DIAKITE	(30)	25.08.84	Esteghlal Khuzestan (Im)
22 N'Tji Michel SAMAKE	(20)	27.06.94	CS Duguwolofolia

DEFENDERS

5 Idrissa COULIBALY	(27)	19.12.87	Hassania Agadir (Mor)
13 Ousmane COULIBALY	(25)	09.07.89	Platanias (Gre)
4 Saif COULIBALY	(26)	13.05.88	Mazembe (DRC)
15 Drissa DIAKITE	(29)	18.02.85	Bastia (Fra)
2 Fousseini DIAWARA	(34)	28.08.80	Tours (Fra)
19 Mohamed KONATE	(22)	20.10.92	Nahdat Berkane (Mor)
3 Adama TAMBOURA	(29)	18.05.85	Randers (Den)
23 Molla WAGUE	(23)	21.02.91	Udinese (Ita)

MIDFIELDERS

11 Sigamary DIARRA	(31)	10.01.84	Valenciennes (Fra)
6 Tongo DOUMBIA	(25)	06.08.89	Toulouse (Fra)
12 Seydou KEITA	(35)	16.01.80	Roma (Ita)
17 Mamoutou N'DIAYE	(24)	15.03.90	Zulte Waregem (Belg)
10 Bakary SAKO	(26)	26.04.88	Wolverhampton W (Eng)
8 Yacouba SYLLA	(24)	29.11.90	Kaysieri Erciyesspor (Tur)
21 Abdou TRAORE	(27)	17.01.88	Bordeaux (Fra)
14 Sambou YATABARE	(25)	02.03.89	Guingamp (Fra)

FORWARDS

18 Abdoulay DIABY	(23)	21.05.91	Lille (Fra)
20 Modibo MAIGA	(27)	03.09.87	Metz (Fra)
9 Mohamed TRAORE	(26)	18.11.88	Al Merrikh (Sud)
7 Mustapha YATABARE	(28)	26.01.86	Trabzonspor (Tur)

COACH

Henryk KASPERCZAK (Pol)	(68)	10.07.46
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SENEGAL

GOALKEEPERS

23 Papa CAMARA	(22)	16.01.93	Sochaux (Fra)
1 Bouna COUNDOUL	(32)	04.03.82	Ethnikos Achna (Cyp)
16 Lys GOMIS	(25)	06.10.89	Trapani (Ita)

DEFENDERS

3 Papy DJILLOBOJJI	(27)	12.01.88	Nantes (Fra)
21 Lamine GASSAMA	(25)	20.10.89	Lorient (Fra)
13 Cheikh M'BENGUE	(26)	23.07.88	Rennes (Fra)
2 Kara MBODJ	(25)	11.11.89	Genk (Belg)
6 Lamine SANE	(27)	22.03.87	Bordeaux (Fra)
20 Salif SANE	(24)	25.08.90	Hanover (Ger)
18 Pape SQUARE	(24)	06.06.90	Lille (Fra)
14 Zargo TOURE	(25)	11.11.89	Le Havre (Fra)

MIDFIELDERS

12 Stephane BADJI	(24)	29.05.90	Brann (Nor)
5 Papakouli DIOP	(28)	19.03.86	Levante (Spa)
17 Idrissa GUEYE	(25)	26.09.89	Lille (Fra)
8 Cheikhou KOUYATE	(25)	21.12.89	West Ham United (Eng)
10 Sadio MANE	(22)	10.04.92	Southampton (Eng)
4 Alfred N'DIAYE	(24)	06.03.90	Real Betis (Spa)
22 Henri SAIVET	(24)	26.10.90	Bordeaux (Fra)

FORWARDS

15 Papis CISSE	(29)	03.06.85	Newcastle United (Eng)
9 Mame Biram DIOUF	(27)	16.12.87	Stoke City (Eng)
19 Moussa KONATE	(21)	03.04.93	Sion (Swi)
11 Dame N'DOYE	(29)	21.02.85	Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)
7 Moussa SOW	(28)	19.01.86	Fenerbahce (Tur)

COACH

Alain GIRESE (Fra)	(62)	02.08.52
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SOUTH AFRICA

GOALKEEPERS

1 Darren KEET	(25)	05.08.89	Kortrijk (Belg)
16 Nhlania KHUZWAYO	(24)	09.02.90	Kaizer Chiefs
22 Jackson MABOKGWANE	(26)	19.01.88	Mpumalanga Black Aces

DEFENDERS

2 Rivaldo COETZEE	(18)	16.10.96	Ajax Cape Town
21 Ayanda GCABA	(28)	08.03.86	Orlando Pirates
14 Thulani HLATSHWAYO	(25)	18.12.89	Bidvest Wits
3 Eric MATHOHO	(24)	01.03.90	Kaizer Chiefs
11 Thabo MATLABA	(27)	13.12.87	Orlando Pirates
6 Anele NGCONGCA	(27)	20.10.87	Genk (Belg)
4 Siyabonga NHLAPO	(26)	23.12.88	Bidvest Wits

MIDFIELDERS

15 Dean FURMAN	(26)	22.06.88	Doncaster Rovers (Eng)
5 Andile JALI	(24)	10.04.90	Oostende (Belg)
12 Reneilwe LETSHOLONYANE	(32)	09.06.82	Kaizer Chiefs
20 Oupa MANYISA	(26)	30.07.88	Orlando Pirates
7 Mandla MASANGO	(25)	18.07.89	Kaizer Chiefs
18 Thuso PHALA	(28)	27.05.86	SuperSport United
13 Thamsanqa SANGWENI	(25)	26.05.89	Chippa United
8 Bongani ZUNGU	(22)	09.10.92	Mamelodi Sundowns
19 Themba ZWANE	(25)	03.08.89	Mamelodi Sundowns

FORWARDS

9 Bongani NDULULA	(25)	29.11.89	AmaZulu
17 Bernard PARKER	(28)	16.03.86	Kaizer Chiefs
23 Tokelo RANTIE	(24)	08.09.90	Bournemouth (Eng)
10 Sibusiso VILAKAZI	(25)	29.12.89	Bidvest Wits

COACH

Ephraim MASHABA	(64)	06.08.50
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TUNISIA

GOALKEEPERS

22 Moez BEN CHERIFIA	(23)	24.06.91	Esperance
1 Farouk BEN MUSTAPHA	(25)	01.07.89	Club Africain
16 Aymen MATHLOUTHI	(30)	14.09.84	Etoile du Sahel

DEFENDERS

3 Aymen ABDENNOUR	(25)	06.08.89	Monaco (Fra)
5 Rami BEDOUJ	(24)	19.01.90	Etoile du Sahel
23 Selim BEN DJEMIA	(25)	29.01.89	Laval (Fra)
2 Syam BEN YOUSSEF	(25)	31.03.89	Astra Giurgiu (Rom)
12 Ali MALOUL	(25)	01.01.90	CS Sfaxien
17 Hamza MATHLOUTHI	(22)	25.05.92	CA Bizertin
4 Bilal MOHSNI	(27)	21.07.87	Rangers (Sco)
20 Mohamed Ali YACOUBI	(24)	05.10.90	Esperance

MIDFIELDERS

9 Yassine CHIKHAOUJ	(28)	22.09.86	Zurich (Swi)
18 Wahbi KHAZRI	(23)	08.02.91	Bordeaux (Fra)
15 Mohamed Ali MONCER	(23)	28.04.91	CS Sfaxien
7 Youssef MSAKNI	(24)	28.10.90	Lekhwiya (Qat)
14 Stephane NATER	(30)	20.01.84	Club Africain
6 Hocine RAGUED	(31)	11.02.83	Esperance
21 Jamel SAIHI	(27)	27.01.87	Montpellier (Fra)
13 Ferjani SASSI	(22)	18.03.92	Metz (Fra)

FORWARDS

19 Ahmed AKAICHI	(25)	23.02.89	Esperance
11 Amine CHEMMITI	(27)	26.12.87	Zurich (Swi)
8 Edem RJAIBI	(20)	05.04.94	CA Bizertin
10 Hamza YOUNES	(28)	16.04.86	Ludogorets (Bul)

COACH

Georges LEEKENS (Belg)	(65)	18.05.49
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ZAMBIA

GOALKEEPERS

1 Danny MUNYAO	(27)	21.01.87	Red Arrows
16 Kennedy MWEENE	(30)	12.11.84	Mamelodi Sundowns (SA)
22 Joshua TITIMA	(22)	20.10.92	Power Dynamos

DEFENDERS

5 Roderick KABWE	(22)	30.11.92	Zanaco
2 Donashano MALAMA	(27)	01.07.87	Nkana
18 Emmanuel MBOLA	(21)	10.05.93	Hapoel Ra'anana (Isr)
4 Christopher MUNTHALI	(23)	02.02.91	Nkana
6 Davies NKAUSU	(29)	01.01.86	Bloemfontein Celtic (SA)
12 Shophia SUNZU	(25)	22.06.89	Shanghai Greenland Shenhua (Chn)

MIDFIELDERS

17	Rainford KALABA	(28)	14.08.86	Mazembe (DRC)
3	Chisamba LUNGU	(23)	31.01.91	Ural Sverdlovsk Oblast (Rus)
14	Kondwani MTONGA	(28)	14.06.86	Shillong Lajong (Ind)
10	Mukuka MULENGA	(21)	06.07.93	Bloemfontein Celtic (SAF)
8	Bruce MUSAKANYA	(21)	25.09.93	Red Arrows
15	Lubamba MUSONDA	(19)	05.05.95	Ulisses (Arm)
7	Spencer SAUTU	(20)	05.10.94	Green Eagles
19	Nathan SINKALA	(23)	23.04.91	Grasshoppers (Swi)



ASIAN CUP SQUADS

AUSTRALIA



GOALKEEPERS

18 Eugene GALEKOVIC	(33)	12.06.81	Adelaide United
12 Mitchell LANGERAK	(26)	22.08.88	Bor Dortmund (Ger)
1 Mathew RYAN	(22)	08.04.92	Club Brugge (Bel)

DEFENDERS

13 Aziz BEHICH	(24)	16.12.90	Bursaspor (Tur)
3 Jason DAVIDSON	(23)	29.06.91	WBA (Eng)
8 Ivan FRANIC	(27)	10.09.87	Torpedo Moscow (Rus)
8 Chris HERD	(25)	04.04.89	Aston Villa (Eng)
20 Trent SAINSBURY	(23)	05.01.92	PEC Zwolle (Hol)
6 Matthew SPIRANOVIC	(26)	27.06.88	Western Sydney Wanderers
22 Alex WILKINSON	(30)	13.08.84	Jeonbuk Motors (SKo)

MIDFIELDERS

19 Terry ANTONIS	(21)	26.11.93	Sydney
23 Mark BRESCIANO	(34)	11.02.80	Al Gharafa (Qat)
15 Mile JEDINAK	(30)	03.08.84	Crystal Palace (Eng)
21 Massimo LUONGO	(22)	25.09.92	Swindon Town (Eng)
17 Matt McKAY	(31)	11.01.83	Brisbane Roar
5 Mark MILLIGAN	(29)	04.08.85	Melbourne Victory
14 James TROIISI	(26)	03.07.88	Zulte Waregem (Bel)

FORWARDS

16 Nathan BURNS	(26)	07.05.88	Wellington Phoenix
4 Tim CAHILL	(35)	06.12.79	New York RB (USA)
9 Tomi JURIC	(23)	22.07.91	Western Sydney Wanderers
10 Robbie KRUSE	(26)	05.10.88	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)
7 Mathew LECKIE	(23)	04.02.91	Ingolstadt (Ger)
11 Tommy ODAR	(23)	10.12.91	Utrecht (Hol)

COACH

Ange POSTECOGLOU	(49)	27.08.65	
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BAHRAIN



GOALKEEPERS

21 Hamed AL DOSERI	(25)	24.07.89	Al Riffa
1 Sayed Mohammed JAFFAR	(29)	25.08.85	Muharraq
22 Ashraf WAHEED	(23)	05.07.91	Manama

DEFENDERS

6 Abdulla ABDU	(26)	27.03.88	Muharraq
3 Waleed AL HAYAM	(26)	04.11.88	Muharraq
13 Abdulla AL HAZAA	(24)	19.07.89	Hidd
23 Rashed AL HOOTI	(25)	24.12.89	Al Riffa
17 Hussain Ali BABA	(32)	11.02.82	Muharraq
18 Mohamed DUALI	(25)	09.05.89	Al Riffa
2 Mohamed HUSAIN	(34)	31.07.80	Al Nassr (Sau)
5 Abdulla SHALLAL	(21)	31.01.93	Al Riffa

MIDFIELDERS

12 Fouzi ANISH	(29)	27.02.85	Al Sailiya (Qat)
9 Abdulwahab AL MALOOD	(25)	21.07.89	Hidd
7 Abdulwahab AL SAFI	(30)	04.06.84	Al Qadisiyah (Sau)
8 Sayed Ahmed JAFFAR	(23)	04.03.91	Al Busaiten
15 Abdulla OMAR	(28)	01.01.87	Muharraq
4 Sayed SAEED	(22)	17.07.92	Al Riffa

FORWARDS

11 Ismail ABDUL-LATIF	(28)	11.09.86	Muharraq
10 Mohammed Tayeb AL ALAWI	(25)	13.10.89	Al Riffa
20 Sami AL HUSAINI	(25)	29.09.89	Al Busaiten
19 Faisal BUDAHOM	(26)	25.09.88	East Riffa
14 Jayce John OKWUNWANNE	(29)	08.10.85	Al Mesaimmer
16 Abdulla YUSUF	(21)	12.06.93	East Riffa

COACH

Marjan EID	(35)	12.05.79	
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CHINA



GOALKEEPERS

23 WANG Dalei	(24)	10.01.89	Shandong Luneng
12 YAN Junling	(23)	28.01.91	Shanghai SIPG
1 ZENG Cheng	(28)	08.01.87	Guangzhou Evergrande

DEFENDERS

14 JI Xiang	(24)	01.03.90	Jiangsu Sainty
4 JIANG Zhipeng	(25)	06.03.89	Guangzhou R&F
6 LI Ang	(21)	15.09.93	Jiangsu Sainty
3 MEI Fang	(25)	14.11.89	Guangzhou Evergrande
2 REN Hang	(25)	23.02.89	Jiangsu Sainty
15 WU Xi	(25)	19.02.89	Jiangsu Sainty
5 ZHANG Linpeng	(25)	09.05.89	Guangzhou Evergrande

MIDFIELDERS

8 CAI Huikang	(25)	10.10.89	Shanghai SIPG
11 HAO Junmin	(27)	24.03.87	Shandong Luneng
22 LUO Lisheng	(21)	29.04.93	Guangzhou Evergrande
19 LIU Binbin	(21)	16.06.93	Shandong Luneng
13 LIU Jianye	(27)	17.06.87	Jiangsu Sainty
7 WU Lei	(23)	19.11.91	Shanghai SIPG
21 YU Hai	(27)	04.06.87	Guizhou Renhe
20 YU Hanchao	(27)	25.02.87	Guangzhou Evergrande
10 ZHENG Zhi	(34)	20.08.80	Guangzhou Evergrande

FORWARDS

18 GAO Lin	(28)	14.02.86	Guangzhou Evergrande
16 SUN Ke	(25)	26.08.89	Jiangsu Sainty
9 YANG Xu	(27)	12.02.87	Shandong Luneng
17 ZHANG Chengdong	(25)	09.02.89	Beijing Guoan

COACH

Alain PERRIN (Fra)	(58)	07.10.56	
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IRAN



GOALKEEPERS

22 Alireza BEIRANVAND	(22)	22.09.92	Naft Tehran
12 Mohsen FOROUZAN	(26)	03.05.88	Esteghlal
1 Alireza HAGHIGHI	(26)	02.05.88	Penafiel (Por)

DEFENDERS

11 Vouria GHAFOURI	(27)	20.09.87	Sepahan
2 Khosro HEYDARI	(31)	14.09.83	Esteghlal
4 Jalal HOSSEINI	(32)	03.02.82	Al Ahli (Qat)
19 Mohammad Reza KHANZADEH	(23)	11.05.91	Persepolis
23 Mehrdad POOLADI	(27)	26.02.87	Al Shahania (Qat)
8 Morteza POURLANGANJ	(22)	19.04.92	Naft Tehran
15 Ramin REZAEIAN	(24)	21.03.90	Rah Ahan
5 Amir Hossein SADEGHI	(33)	06.09.81	Esteghlal

MIDFIELDERS

9 Omid EBRAHIMI	(27)	16.09.87	Esteghlal
3 Ehsan HASAFI	(24)	25.02.90	Sepahan
6 Javad NEKOUNAM	(34)	07.09.80	Osasuna (Spa)
17 Soroush RAFIEI	(24)	24.03.90	Foolad
7 Masoud SHOJAIE	(30)	09.06.84	Al Shahania (Qat)
14 Andranik TEYMOURIAN	(31)	06.03.83	Tractor Sazi

FORWARDS

13 Vahid AMIRI	(26)	02.04.88	Naft Tehran
10 Karim ANSARIFARD	(24)	03.04.90	Osasuna (Spa)
20 Sardar AZMOUN	(20)	01.01.95	Rubin Kazan (Rus)
21 Ashkan DEJAGAH	(28)	05.06.86	Al Arabi (Qat)
16 Reza GHOODHANNEHJAD	(27)	20.09.87	Charlton Ath (Eng)
18 Alireza JAHANBAKSH	(21)	11.08.93	NEC (Hol)

COACH

Carlos QUEIROZ (Por)	(61)	01.03.53	
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IRAQ



GOALKEEPERS

20 Mohammed HAMEED	(21)	24.01.93	Al Shorta
12 Jalal HASSAN	(23)	18.05.91	Erbil
1 Ali YASEEN	(21)	09.08.93	Naft Al Janoob

DEFENDERS

6 Ali ADNAN	(21)	19.12.93	Rizespor (Tur)
3 Ali BAHIAT	(22)	03.03.92	Al Shorta
4 Ali FAEZ	(20)	09.09.94	Erbil
2 Ahmad IBRAHIM	(22)	25.02.92	Ajman (UAE)
15 Dhurgham ISMAIL	(20)	23.05.94	Al Shorta
18 Sameh SAEED	(22)	01.07.92	Baghdad
23 Waleed SALEM	(23)	05.01.92	Al Shorta
14 Salam SHAKER	(28)	31.07.86	Al Shorta

MIDFIELDERS

21 Saad ABDUL-AMIR	(22)	19.01.92	Erbil
22 Ali HISNI	(20)	01.10.94	Al Minaa
7 Amjad KALAF	(23)	05.10.91	Al Shorta
19 Mahdi KAMEL	(20)	06.01.95	Al Shorta
5 Yaser KASIM	(23)	10.05.91	Swindon Town (Eng)
13 Osama RASHID	(22)	17.01.92	Alphense Boys (Hol)
11 Humam TARIQ	(18)	10.02.96	Al Dhafra (UAE)
9 Ahmed YASIN	(23)	22.04.91	Orebro (Swe)

FORWARDS

17 Alaa ABDUL-ZAHRA	(27)	22.12.87	Al Shorta
16 Marwan HUSSEIN	(24)	04.01.91	Al Shorta
10 Younis MAHMOUD	(31)	03.02.83	(unattached)
8 Justin MERAM	(26)	04.12.88	Columbus Crew (USA)

COACH

Radhi SHENAIHIL	(48)	11.08.66	
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JAPAN



GOALKEEPERS

23 Masaaki HIGASHIGUCHI	(28)	12.05.86	Gamba Osaka
1 Eiji KAWASHIMA	(31)	20.03.83	Standard Liege (Bel)
12 Shusaku NISHIKAWA	(28)	18.06.86	Urawa Red Diamonds

DEFENDERS

18 Takashi INUI	(26)	02.06.88	E Frankfurt (Ger)
5 Yuto NAGATOMO	(28)	12.09.86	Internazionale (Ita)
3 Kosuke OTA	(27)	23.07.87	Tokyo
21 Gotoku SAKAI	(23)	14.03.91	Stuttgart (Ger)
16 Tsukasa SHIOTANI	(26)	05.12.88	Sanfrecce Hiroshima
19 Gen SHOJI	(22)	11.12.92	Kashima Antlers
2 Naomichi UEDA	(20)	24.10.94	Kashima Antlers
22 Maya YOSHIDA	(26)	24.08.88	Southampton (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

7 Yasuhiro ENDO	(34)	28.01.80	Gamba Osaka
17 Makoto HASEBE	(30)	18.01.84	E Frankfurt (Ger)
10 Shinji KAGAWA	(25)	17.03.89	Bor Dortmund (Ger)
13 Yu KOBAYASHI	(27)	23.09.87	Kawasaki Frontale
15 Yasuyuki KONNO	(31)	25.01.83	Gamba Osaka
6 Masato MORISHIGE	(27)	21.05.87	Tokyo
20 Gaku SHIBASAKI	(22)	28.05.92	Kashima Antlers

FORWARDS

4 Keisuke HONDA	(28)	13.06.86	Milan (Ita)
8 Hiroshi KIYOTAKE	(25)	12.11.89	Hanover (Ger)
14 Yoshinori MUTO	(22)	15.07.92	Tokyo
9 Shinji OKAZAKI	(28)	16.04.86	Mainz (Ger)
11 Yohei TOYODA	(29)	11.04.85	Sagan Tosu

COACH

Javier AGUIRRE (Mex)	(56)	01.12.58	
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JORDAN



GOALKEEPERS

22 Ahmed ABDEL-SATTAR	(30)	06.07.84	Al Jazeera
1 Amer SHAFI	(32)	14.02.82	Al Wehdat
12 Moataz YASEEN	(32)	03.11.82	That Ras

DEFENDERS

21 Mohammad AL DMEIRI	(27)	30.08.87	Al Ittihad (Sau)
19 Anas BANI YASEEN	(26)	29.11.88	Al Raed (Sau)
3 Tareq KHATTAB	(22)	06.05.92	Al Shabab (Sau)
5 Mohammad MUSTAFA	(25)	29.10.89	Al Khor (Qat)
11 Odai ZAHARAN	(23)	29.01.91	Shabab Al Ordon

MIDFIELDERS

16 Munther ABU AMARAH	(22)	24.04.92	Al Wehdat
15 Mohammad AL DAWUD	(22)	12.04.92	Hidd (Bah)
2 Raja'i AYED	(21)	25.07.93	Al Wehdat
13 Khalid BANI ATTIAH	(23)	08.06.91	Al Faisaly (Sau)
18 Ahmed ELIAS	(24)	09.11.90	Al Wehdat
6 Saeed MURJAN	(24)	10.02.90	Al Ramtha
4 Samir RAJA	(20)	03.09.94	Al Wehdat
17 Saleh RATEB	(20)	18.12.94	Al Wehdat
9 Ahmed SARIWEH	(20)	23.01.94	Al Qadisiyah (Sau)

FORWARDS

20 Hamza AL DARDOUR	(23)	12.05.91	Al Khaleej (Sau)
23 Yousef AL RAWASHDEH	(24)	14.03.90	Al Ramtha
8 Odai AL SAIFY	(28)	26.05.86	Al Salmiya (Ku)
14 Abdallah DEEB	(27)	10.03.87	Al Riffa (Bah)
10 Ahmad HAYEL	(31)	30.10.83	Al Arabi (Ku)
7 Mahmoud ZATARA	(24)	08.01.91	Al Wehdat

COACH

Ray WILKINS (Eng)	(58)	14.09.56	
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KUWAIT



GOALKEEPERS

22 Sulaiman ABDULGHAFOUR	(23)	26.02.91	Al Arabi
1 Khaled AL RASHIDI	(27)	20.04.87	Al Salmiya
23 Hameed YOUSSEF	(27)	10.08.87	Al Arabi

NORTH KOREA



GOALKEEPERS

22 JU Kwang-min	(24) 20.05.90	Rimyongsu
18 RI Kwang-il	(26) 13.04.88	April 25
1 RI Myong-guk	(28) 09.09.86	Pyongyang City

DEFENDERS

16 CHA Jong-hyok	(29) 25.09.85	Wil (Swi)
5 HAN Song-hyok	(27) 11.12.87	Rimyongsu
15 JANG Kuk-chol	(20) 16.02.94	Hwaebul
3 JANG Song-hyok	(23) 18.01.91	Rimyongsu
4 JON Kwang-ik	(26) 05.04.88	Amrokgang
2 RI Chang-ho	(25) 04.01.90	Rimyongsu
6 RO Hak-su	(24) 19.01.90	Rimyongsu
13 SIM Hyon-jin	(24) 01.01.91	April 25

MIDFIELDERS

11 JONG Il-gwan	(22) 30.10.92	Rimyongsu
21 O Hyok-chol	(23) 02.08.91	April 25
9 PAK Song-chol	(27) 24.09.87	Rimyongsu
7 RI Sang-chol	(24) 26.12.90	Rimyongsu
19 RI Yong-jik	(23) 08.02.91	Tokushima Vortis (Jap)
8 RYANG Yong-gi	(33) 07.01.82	Vegalta Sendai (Jap)

FORWARDS

20 CHOE Won	(22) 25.11.92	Hwaebul
14 KYE Song-hyok	(22) 12.11.92	April 25
12 OM Chol-song	(22) 12.11.92	April 25
10 PAK Kwang-ryong	(22) 27.09.92	Vaduz (Swi)
17 SO Hyon-uk	(22) 17.04.92	April 25

COACH

JO Tong-sop	(55) 01.05.59
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OMAN



GOALKEEPERS

22 Sulaiman AL BURAIKI	(28) 30.07.86	Al Nahda
1 Ali AL HABSII	(33) 30.12.81	Wigan Ath (Eng)
18 Mazin AL KASBI	(21) 27.04.93	Fanja

DEFENDERS

16 Ali AL BUSAIDI	(23) 21.01.91	Al Nahda
13 Abdul Salam AL MUKHAINI	(26) 07.04.88	Al Oruba
19 Ahmed AL MUKHAINI	(29) 02.05.85	Al Oruba
2 Mohammed AL MUSALAMI	(24) 27.04.90	Fanja
15 Ali Salim AL NAHAR	(22) 21.08.92	Dhofar
3 Jaber AL OWAISI	(25) 04.11.89	Al Shabab
5 Nasser AL SHIMLI	(25) 15.02.89	Al Oruba
17 Hassan MUDHAFAR	(34) 26.06.80	Al Oruba
11 Amer SAID	(24) 05.04.90	Dhofar

MIDFIELDERS

8 Eid AL FARSI	(27) 31.01.87	Al Oruba
4 Ali AL JABRI	(24) 29.01.90	Fanja
21 Mohsin AL KHALDI	(23) 01.01.92	Saham
12 Ahmed MUBARAK	(29) 23.02.85	Al Oruba

FORWARDS

14 Yaqoob ABDUL-KARIM	(29) 04.09.85	Saham
20 Amad AL HOSNI	(30) 18.07.84	Saham
9 Abdulaziz AL MUQBALI	(25) 23.04.89	Fanja
23 Said AL RUZAIQI	(28) 12.12.86	Al Nahda
7 Mohammed AL SIYABI	(26) 21.12.88	Al Shabab
10 Qasim SAID	(25) 20.04.89	Al Nasr
6 Raed Ibrahim SALEH	(22) 09.06.92	Fanja

COACH

Paul LE GUEN (Fra)	(50) 01.03.64
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PALESTINE



GOALKEEPERS

1 Toufic ALI	(24) 08.11.90	Wadi Al Nes
22 Rami HAMADEH	(23) 20.04.91	Shabab Al Khalil
21 Ramzi SALEH	(34) 08.08.80	Smouha (Egy)

DEFENDERS

6 Mousa ABUJAZR	(27) 28.08.87	Shabab Al Khalil
18 Mus'ab AL BATTAT	(21) 21.11.93	Shabab Al Dhahiriya
15 Abdelatif BAHDARI	(30) 20.02.84	Al Wehdat
5 Haytham DEEB	(28) 03.12.86	Hilal Al Quds
2 Raed FARES	(32) 06.12.82	Thaqafi Tulkarm
4 Ahmed HARBI	(28) 16.07.86	Al Am'ary
14 Abdullah JABER	(21) 17.02.93	Hilal Al Quds
17 Alexis NORAMBUENA	(30) 31.03.84	GKS Belchatow (Pol)
12 Tamer SALAH	(28) 03.02.86	Hilal Al Quds

MIDFIELDERS

3 Hussam ABU SALEH	(31) 14.02.83	Hilal Al Quds
10 Ismail AL AMOUR	(31) 02.10.83	Hilal Al Quds
13 Jaka IHBEISHEH	(28) 29.08.86	NK Krka (Sln)
23 Murad ISMAIL	(32) 15.12.82	Hilal Al Quds
8 Hesham SALHE	(27) 08.11.87	Hilal Al Quds
20 Khader YOUSEF	(30) 06.10.84	Wadi Al Nes

FORWARDS

19 Abdelhamid ABUHABIB	(25) 08.06.89	Markaz Balata
16 Mahmoud EID	(21) 23.06.93	Nykopings (Swe)
11 Ahmed MAHER	(23) 22.07.91	Shabab Al Dhahiriya
7 Ashraf NU'MAN	(28) 29.07.86	Al Faisaly (Sau)
9 Khaled SALEM	(25) 17.11.89	Hilal Al Quds

COACH

Saeb JENDEYA	(39) 13.05.75
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QATAR



GOALKEEPERS

22 Saad AL SHEEB	(24) 19.02.90	Al Sadd
1 Qasem BURHAN	(29) 15.12.85	Al Gharafa
21 Ahmed SOUFIANE	(24) 09.08.90	El Jaish

DEFENDERS

15 Abdurahman ABUBAKAR	(24) 03.08.90	El Jaish
3 Abdelkarim HASSAN	(21) 28.08.93	Al Sadd
13 Ibrahim MAJID	(24) 12.05.90	Al Sadd
6 Bilal MOHAMMED	(28) 02.06.86	Al Gharafa
7 Khalid MUFTAH	(22) 02.07.92	Lekhwiya
4 Almahdi Ali MUKHTAR	(22) 02.03.92	Al Sadd
2 Mohammed MUSA	(28) 23.03.86	Lekhwiya

MIDFIELDERS

14 Khalid ABDULLAROUF	(25) 14.11.89	El Jaish
8 Ali ASSADALLA	(21) 19.01.93	Al Sadd
20 Karim BOUDIAF	(25) 16.09.89	Lekhwiya
23 Ahmed EL SAYED	(24) 23.03.90	Ummi Salal
5 Abdulaziz HATEM	(24) 28.10.90	Al Arabi
10 Khalafan IBRAHIM	(26) 18.02.88	Al Sadd
16 Boualem KHOUKI	(24) 07.09.90	Al Arabi
17 Ismael MOHAMMAD	(24) 05.04.90	Lekhwiya
19 Mohammed MUNTARI	(21) 20.12.93	El Jaish

FORWARDS

9 Meshal ABDULLAH	(30) 02.05.84	Al Ahli
18 Mohammed Tresor ABDULLAH	(27) 08.04.87	Lekhwiya
11 Hassan AL HAIDOS	(24) 11.12.90	Al Sadd
12 Magid MOHAMED	(29) 11.10.85	El Jaish

COACH

Djamel BELMADI (Alg)	(38) 27.03.76
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SAUDI ARABIA



GOALKEEPERS

1 Waleed ABDULLAH	(28) 19.04.86	Al Shabab
22 Abdullah AL ENEZI	(24) 20.09.90	Al Nassr
21 Abdullah AL SUDAIRY	(22) 02.02.92	Al Hilal

DEFENDERS

23 Majed AL MARSHEDI	(30) 01.11.84	Al Shabab
2 Saeed AL MOWALAD	(23) 09.03.91	Al Ahli
13 Yasser AL SHAHRANI	(22) 25.05.92	Al Hilal
4 Abdullah AL ZORI	(27) 13.08.87	Al Hilal
12 Hassan Muath FALLATAH	(28) 27.01.86	Al Shabab
16 Motaz HAWSAWI	(22) 17.02.92	Al Ahli
5 Omar HAWSAWI	(29) 27.09.85	Al Nassr
3 Osama HAWSAWI	(30) 31.03.84	Al Ahli

MIDFIELDERS

20 Nawaf AL ABED	(24) 26.01.90	Al Hilal
6 Mustafa AL BASSAS	(21) 02.06.93	Al Ahli
18 Salem AL DAWSARI	(23) 19.08.91	Al Hilal
7 Salman AL FARAJ	(25) 01.08.89	Al Hilal
17 Taisir AL JASSAM	(30) 25.07.84	Al Ahli
11 Waleed BAKSHWEEN	(25) 12.11.89	Al Ahli
15 Ibrahim GHALEB	(24) 28.09.90	Al Nassr
14 Saud KARIRI	(34) 08.07.80	Al Hilal

FORWARDS

19 Fahad AL MUWALLAD	(20) 14.09.94	Al Ittihad
10 Mohammad AL SAHLAWI	(27) 10.01.87	Al Ahli
8 Yahya AL SHEHRI	(24) 26.06.90	Al Nassr
9 Naif HAZAZI	(25) 11.01.89	Al Shabab

COACH

Cosmin OLAROIU (Rom)	(45) 10.06.69
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SOUTH KOREA



GOALKEEPERS

1 JUNG Sung-nyong	(30) 04.01.85	Suwon Bluewings
23 KIM Jin-hyeon	(27) 06.07.87	Cerezo Osaka (Jap)
21 KIM Seung-gyu	(24) 30.09.90	Ulsan Hyundai

DEFENDERS

22 CHA Du-ri	(34) 25.07.80	Seoul
20 JANG Hyun-soo	(23) 28.09.91	Guangzhou R&F (Chn)
2 KIM Chang-soo	(29) 12.09.85	Kashiwa Reysol (Jap)
3 KIM Jin-su	(22) 13.06.92	Hoffenheim (Ger)
4 KIM Ju-young	(26) 09.07.88	Shanghai SIPG (Chn)
19 KIM Young-gwon	(24) 27.02.90	Guangzhou E' grande (Chn)
5 KWAK Tae-hwi	(33) 08.07.81	Al Hilal (Sau)
6 PARK Joo-ho	(27) 16.01.87	Mainz (Ger)

MIDFIELDERS

14 HAN Kook-young	(24) 19.04.90	Qatar SC (Qat)
16 KI Sung-yueng	(25) 24.01.89	Swansea City (Eng)
8 KIM Min-woo	(24) 25.02.90	Sagan Tosu (Jap)
13 KOO Ja-cheol	(25) 27.02.89	Mainz (Ger)
17 LEE Chung-yong	(26) 02.07.88	Bolton W (Eng)
15 LEE Myung-joo	(24) 24.04.90	Al Ain (UAE)
10 NAM Tae-hee	(23) 03.07.91	Lekhwiya (Qat)

FORWARDS

9 CHO Young-cheol	(25) 31.05.89	Qatar SC (Qat)
12 HAN Kyo-won	(24) 15.06.90	Jeonbuk Motors
18 LEE Jeong-hyeop	(23) 24.06.91	Sangju Sangmu
11 LEE Keun-ho	(29) 11.04.85	El Jaish (Qat)
7 SON Heung-min	(22) 08.07.92	B Leverkusen (Ger)

COACH

Uli STELKE (Ger)	(60) 15.11.54
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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



GOALKEEPERS

12 Khalid EISA	(25) 15.09.89	Al Ain
1 Majed NASER	(30) 01.04.84	Al Wasl
22 Mohamed YOUSIF	(23) 25.05.91	Sharjah

DEFENDERS

3 Walid ABBAS	(29) 11.06.85	Al Ahli
19 Ismail AHMED	(31) 01.07.83	Al Ain
23 Mohamed AHMED	(25) 16.04.89	Al Ain
8 Hamdan AL KAMALI	(25) 02.05.89	Al Wahda
18 Mohammed FAWZI	(24) 22.02.90	Al Ain
9 Abdulaziz HUSSAIN	(24) 10.09.90	Al Ahli
6 Mohamad SALEM	(29) 01.03.85	Al Ain
14 Abdelaziz SANQOUR	(25) 07.05.89	Al Ahli

MIDFIELDERS

5 Amer ABDULRAHMAN	(25) 03.07.89	Baniyas
16 Mohamed ABDULRAHMAN	(26) 01.01.89	Al Ain
10 Omar ABDULRAHMAN	(23) 20.09.91	Al Ain
4 Habib AL FARDAN	(24) 11.11.90	Al Nasr
15 Ismail AL HAMMADI	(26) 01.07.88	Al Ahli
13 Khamis ESMAEL	(25) 16.08.89	Al Jazira
17 Majed HASSAN	(22) 01.08.92	Al Ahli
2 Hassan IBRAHIM	(24) 19.10.90	Al Shabab
21 Haboush SALEH	(25) 13.07.89	Baniyas

FORWARDS

20 Saeed AL KATHIRI	(26) 28.03.88	Al Wahda
11 Ahmed KHALIL	(23) 08.06.91	Al Ahli
7 Ali MABKHOUT	(24) 05.10.90	Al Jazira

COACH

Mahdi ALI	(49) 20.04.65
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UZBEKISTAN



GOALKEEPERS

12 Ignaty NESTEROV	(31) 20.06.83	Lokomotiv Tashkent
1 Eldorbek SUYUNOV	(23) 12.04.91	Nasaf Qarshi
21 Akbar TURAEV	(25) 27.08.89	Bunyodkor

DEFENDERS

19 Vitaliy DENISOV	(27) 24.02.87	Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)
5 Anzur ISMAILOV	(29) 21.04.85	Changchun Yatai (Chn)
2 Egor KRIMETS	(22) 27.01.92	Pakhtakor Tashkent
14 Shukhrat MUKHAMMADIEV	(25) 29.06.89	Nasaf Qarshi
3 Shavkat MULLAJANOV	(28) 19.01.86	Olmaliq
23 Akmal SHORAKHMEDOV	(28) 10.05.86	Bunyodkor
20 Islom TUKHTAKHODJAEV	(25) 30.10.89	Lokomotiv Tashkent

MIDFIELDERS

9 Odil AHMEDOV	(27) 25.11.87	Krasnodar (Rus)
8 Server DIEPAROV	(32) 03.10.82	Seongnam (SKo)
15 Jasur HASANOV	(31) 02.08.83	Lokomotiv Tashkent
7 Azizbek HAYDAROV	(29) 08.07.85	Al Shabab (UAE)
10 Jamshid ISKANDEROV	(21) 16.10.93	Pakhtakor Tashkent
18 Timur KAPADZE	(33) 05.09.81	Lokomotiv Tashkent
22 Farukh SAYFIEV	(23) 17.01.91	Nasaf Qarshi
16 Vokhid SHODIEV	(28) 09.11.86	Bunyodkor
13 Lutfulla TURAEV	(26) 30.03.88	Lokomotiv Tashkent
17 Sanzhar TURSUNOV	(28) 29.12.86	Vorskla Poltava (Ukr)

FORWARDS

6 Bahodir NASIMOV	(27) 02.05.87	Padideh (Iran)
4 Sardon RASHIDOV	(23) 14.06.91	Bunyodkor
11 Igor SERGEEV	(21) 30.04.93	Pakhtakor Tashkent

COACH

Mirjalol QOSIMOV	(44) 17.09.70
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Manchester United 4 Benfica 1

A decade after the Munich Air Disaster, Busby's United became the first English team to be crowned champions of Europe



Pressure... John Aston (in blue) causes problems for the Benfica defence

Ten years after seven of the "Busby Babes" were killed at Munich airport on their way home from a Champions Cup tie in Belgrade, Manchester United manager Matt Busby saw his ambition to conquer Europe become reality.

Philip Rising, who was at Wembley for *World Soccer*, began his report by writing: "There can be few more totally satisfying and exhilarating experiences in this world than to witness a personal dream and ambition acquire fulfilment."

It was a match that had a slow start but came to life in the second half, before reaching a crescendo in extra-time.

United, without injured captain Denis Law but boasting such talents as George Best, Bobby Charlton and a youthful Brian Kidd, on this his 19th birthday, faced a Benfica side whose midfield and forward line contained the same six players who had played against England, at the same venue, two years earlier in the World Cup semi-final.

"A flash of Charlton genius in the most unexpected fashion brought United a goal and a different complexion to the match," wrote Rising as he described the header that gave United the lead. Graca equalised, and Eusebio nearly snatched victory in the closing minutes, but as the game went into extra time it was United who found new levels of energy and skill.

In Rising's report, Best's "display of



Birthday boy... Kidd

footwork and ball control in beating four Benfica defenders inside the penalty area bordered on the miraculous", while "John Aston's wonderful speed left Benfica right-back Adolfo helpless – the defender had about as much chance as a lame turtle would have against a greyhound."

The game was settled by three goals in the space of seven minutes, and as United celebrated at the final whistle, Rising wrote: "The crowd roared the name of Busby, but Matt refused the offer of his players to lead them to the cup.

"Instead he watched with pride as Bobby Charlton received the huge trophy and then walked slowly from the arena that had seen a dream come true." **WS**



KEY MOMENTS



Head start... Charlton puts United in front

11 min A shot from Eusebio rattles the United crossbar after a fine move involving Jaime Graca and Jose Torres.

27 min David Sadler shoots wide after a passing move with Brian Kidd.

53 min Bobby Charlton opens the scoring for United with a glancing header from Sadler's cross. **1-0**

72 min George Best beats two defenders but is thwarted by keeper Jose Henrique, who then stops a tame follow-up from Sadler.

79 min Graca equalises for Benfica with a header. **1-1**

86 min Eusebio breaks through, but with just Alex Stepney to beat, his powerful shot is held by the United keeper, despite it nearly knocking him off his feet.



Simply the Best... United take the lead again

92 min A clearance from Stepney is headed on by Kidd and Best calmly dribbles round the goalkeeper to slot the ball into an empty net. **2-1**

94 min From a corner, Sadler nods the ball towards goal but Kidd's header is palmed away by Henrique. However, United's quick-thinking teenage striker gets his head to the rebound and scores. **3-1**

99 min After some great work down the right flank, Kidd feeds the ball into the net for his second goal of the game. **4-1**



Decisive... Charlton wraps it up for United



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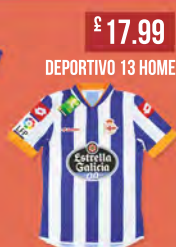
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